Mustard Seed

Some Pungent Paragraphs

by Francis P. Donnelly S. J.

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SOME PUNGENT PARAGRAPHS

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SOME PUNGENT PARAGRAPHS

BY

FRANCIS P. DONNELLY, S.J.

AUTHOR OF WATCHING AN HOUR, HEART OF THE GOSPEL
HEART OF REVELATION, ETC.

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TWO PARABLES AND A REQUEST

. . .

HERE is the first parable! "To what shall we liken the Kingdom of God? Or to what parable shall we compare it? It is as a grain of mustard-seed, which when it is sown in the earth is less than all the seeds that are in the earth. And when it is sown, it groweth up and becometh greater than all herbs and shooteth out great branches, so that the birds of the air may dwell under the shadow thereof." Mustard-seed suggests pungency to us, but for the Jews to whom our Lord spoke this parable, the mustard-seed was proverbial of something minute. Perhaps the reader may admit that these reprinted papers deserve such a collective title because of modern as well as ancient suggestions, but may deem them immoderately ambitious if they claim further resemblance to the gospel mustard-seed and aspire to that importance which

will offer to the flight of thoughts some rest and helpful shade.

And here is another parable! When the writer was at college, he heard during a retreat the following story. Once upon a time a man was carrying upon his shoulder a sharp scythe and was much bothered by a cur barking at his heels. In anger the man brought down the scythe to strike his tormentor, but cut off his own head in the operation. What the original moral of this story was, has long been forgotten, but a very apt lesson occurs to the writer now as he sends out these papers. He is shamefully conscious that the edge he has been whetting week after week in the columns of *America*, finds much work to do at home before it goes afield against its intended crop of foibles and follies.

Now for the request! Will the reader kindly remember that many of these papers are intentional caricatures and as such give certain features undue prominence. No weakness is found in life without some palliations to temper its unattractiveness. It is the dangerous privilege of the caricaturist to isolate a fault. He gains point but he likely exaggerates. A

like hyperbole may also be detected, if the reader is exacting, in many general statements which are given epigrammatic form for effective presentation. Finally the reader is asked to believe that an indictment of a whole class is not intended. Where the writer speaks of young or old, of men or women, of teachers or members of other professions, he does not necessarily mean more than some or perhaps many and he has good reason to think that the reader is an exception to every disparagement and an exemplification of every virtue of which there is question in this little book.

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SELF-ENCOURAGEMENT

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SELF-ENCOURAGEMENT

THE encouragement of others is one of the most useful, the noblest, the holiest occupations a man could take up. The columns of life are filled with want advertisements clamoring for the commodity. Ninety-nine out of a hundred want encouragement all the time, and the hundredth wants encouragement for only twenty-three hours and fifty-nine minutes every day. The radium supply is scarce and hard to get; the supply of encouragement is more limited because no one gives encouragement and everybody wants and needs it. There is only one thing to be done. You must make up your mind to encourage yourself. Take yourself aside and reason with yourself earnestly. Laugh away fears, dismiss idle regrets, pick yourself up, shake off the dust, dry from the eyes the blinding tears, say something cheerful to yourself, put on a new smile,

slap yourself on the back, light up a bright flame of hope, give another turn to the crank, and away you go with new vim and new energy.

Perhaps you will say that you do make an attempt at self-encouragement, but you confess to failure. It is likely you are flattering yourself or coaxing or deceiving yourself, and not truly encouraging yourself. You do not go deep enough. Encouragement, according to the makers of dictionaries, means putting heart into one. Courage and encouragement are allied in derivation and every-day life. You can not rear the solid structure of encouragement on the unstable foundation of self-deception. You can not put fiber into a rotten log by putting on it a veneer of oak; you must put into it a heart of oak.

Have you ever gone into the heart of this subject? Do you know what is the source of nine-tenths of the world's supply of discouragement? You will promptly answer dyspepsia. You are wrong. That is the source of the one-tenth. The nine-tenths are due to pride and to the most cowardly species of pride, human respect. If a man slips and falls on

the sidewalk, he looks around to find out whether he has been seen. If not, he brushes himself off, goes on his way and forgets all about the fall. But if one person saw him, and especially if many witnessed his plight, he will rehearse the different details of it to himself, caricature every part of it as it appears to others, will indulge in profanity, or be tempted to, will memorialize the newspapers, the mayor, the city commissioners, will make his fall a perpetual grievance, and declare emphatically, finally, with clenched fist and red face, that he will never expose himself to such a ludicrous mishap again. He is discouraged from walking because the crowd laughed. Now, is not that a parable giving the history of most discouragement?

The first thing, then, that the self-encourager must do is to forget the other man's sneer or laugh. Geologists revel in the mysteries of erosion, and they will tell you how a little pebble may be spun around on a large rock by the current of a stream, until it has worn a cavity which they call a pot-hole. Pride keeps the stream of consciousness playing on one failure until it has eroded a cavity of dis-

couragement in the soul. Cut off the stream; forget the failure. Don't resort to artificial means for forgetting. Dutch courage is not the best kind of bravery and the Dutch encouragement of alcohol, or the Chinese encouragement of opium, or any other drug, merely postpones the encouragement. When the tide goes out, the corpse will be there worse than before.

Control your imagination as well as your memory. Take your difficulties on the installment plan. A man may swallow deadly poison safely if he does but graduate the doses. The devil knows well how a vivid imagination, terrified by the prospect of a long evil, may benumb a resolute soul. He said to Ignatius Loyola: "You can't keep this up for fifty or sixty years." "Fifty or sixty years!" replied the Saint, "Who promises me that length of life? I'll keep this up till noon, and if alive then, I will hold on till evening."

Self-encouragement is the serum for tramps and degenerates and applicants for divorce and intending suicides, and for everybody else. Use it often.

CHILDISHNESS OF SOUL

CHILDISHNESS OF SOUL

GROWN people do not usually sit down for a good, long cry, but they often resort to something that amounts to the same. There are no tears, it is true; there is no wet handkerchief, but there is a weeping in the soul beyond the reach of handkerchief. Spiritual tears are often shed copiously. A humiliation has occurred. We have been lowered somehow to the dust. Someone has crossed us or been preferred to us or has succeeded where we failed or where we know we should fail if we tried. In a word, something has gone wrong in our life, and we go apart and grow gloomy and begin to sulk and pout in spirit. Sometimes, even with a smile on the face, the soul weeps, and there is no attempt made to check the flow of tears. Rather do we nurse our grief and make a pet of it.

A child will nurse and pet a doll, crooning

over it and talking to it. Our humiliation, our grief of soul, is our doll. We keep it in recollection and press it closely to the heart of our heart. Are we not still children in the life of the soul? Are we not still in the nursery of the spiritual life? A towel with a large knot for a head makes a doll for children. As trivial a thing will make a doll for the spiritual nursery. Ah, when shall we put off the things of childhood and grow too old for nurslings or dolls of any sort? When shall we cast aside the ugly little dolls of jealousy and wounded pride, the prettily painted dolls of vanity, all those playthings of the spirit that in our gloomy moments we nurse and fondle? When? At the moment our souls grow to the age of manhood.

Pride keeps the soul in childhood; humility will age it. Pride is blinding and deceitful; humility loves the truth and lets light into the soul. If we are ever to grow old in soul, we must cease letting ourselves be deceived by pride. In the child the imagination is active. It can dress up a knotted rag to the grandeur of a queen by means of the wardrobe, which childish fancy keeps well stocked. Thread-

bare cloth becomes costly silk; the frayed edge changes to royal ermine, and bone or celluloid buttons are crystallized into brilliant diamonds. What imagination is for the childhood of man, pride is for the childhood of the soul — a changer, a magnifier, an exaggerator, a deceiver. The tiny affront, the slight rebuke, the insignificant neglect are changed by the magnifying eyes of pride into the bitter insult, the undeserved reproof, the basest and blackest ingratitude. "That was uncalled for," says pride. "Why am I treated in this way?" Then, after nursing the wrong, "It is a shame." More fondling of the grievance; then, "It is an outrage." Again pride turns to pet its little doll and cries, "It is an unbearable crime." No, pride, it is a knotted rag that you have been making a queen out of. Throw it aside for a while, put it out of your memory; take a walk out into God's fresh air, and under His blue sky send up to Him a prayer or two, and when you come back, sane and sober, and take another look at your nursling, you will say: "Why, it is only a rag."

So humility, the truth-teller, gives age to the soul. Tell me how old you are in humility,

and I will tell you how old you are in the life of the spirit. Humility is the virtue that has a place for everything and puts everything and everybody in the proper place — God first, creation second. It leaves appearances and attains realities. It admits virtues while it is not blind to defects. So it strips off the disguises of pride and finds that much, if not all, of the humiliation we fume at, was deserved, that the ingratitude is imaginary, that the rebuke, affront, or neglect was not as bad as pride tricks it out to be. Humility takes off the green spectacles of jealousy and the dark ones of resentment. Its sight needs no corrective; or if it should happen at any time to be weak, then it uses the clear, transparent glasses of charity, the best medium for correcting short-sightedness on the subject of others' good qualities, the crystalline lens that reveals and magnifies the shining grain of gold in hard, rough trials or amid the desert sands of life.

TEACHING A MAN HIS PLACE

TEACHING A MAN HIS PLACE

THIS is a profession that is overcrowded and has the largest waiting list of perhaps any. It is strange why so many should be eager to enter upon it, because for two very convincing and satisfactory reasons it is one of the most unsuccessful businesses ever started. Clothing stores fail as often as may be necessary, if we may believe the bargain signs. Comic papers never leave us long without stories or pictures of stranded theatrical companies. But the business of teaching a man his place never is a complete success, and that of teaching a woman her place has a larger percentage of failures.

The two reasons, however, are: the incompetency of the teacher and the intractability of the pupil. The teacher is a failure as a teacher, and the pupil is a failure as a pupil. Such a school had better close its doors and

declare a perpetual vacation. Yet, strange to say, it is always opening its doors, always holding its sessions, always giving lessons, impossible to be learned, to pupils who cannot learn. When a teacher who cannot teach meets a pupil who cannot be taught, the problem resembles that of the body which nothing could stop meeting the body which nothing could move, and it deserves the famous answer: "Something's got to give."

The teacher shows his incompetency at once by saying he is going to teach one thing when in reality he is teaching another. To state that one is going to teach another his place is like the phrases: "Not at home," "I don't remember," merely a way of stating the opposite to what one means. The teacher really means to say he going to teach another, not his, but the teacher's place.

Again the teacher's methods, in addition to his message, are faulty and not based upon the psychological principles of the soundest pedagogy. You want to show a man his place, that is to say, your place, and you wait to begin your teaching until you are excited and pretty nearly unable to talk or think coherently.

When people are cool, they are not so tremendously agitated over the geographical location and boundaries of themselves and others. Besides, how can you hope to teach another his place, which, strangely, yet naturally, never under any circumstances fails to be lower than yours, if, when you begin your showing, you take it for granted that you are on a mountain and he in a mine. He, on the contrary, is firmly persuaded that you are in a hole and he on the Himalayas. He feels that your excitement and exaggeration in relegating him to the antipodes is so unfair that he in reaction begins to fit angels' wings to his shoulders for flights to the blue sky, leaving you where he feels you belong. At this point school breaks up.

But do not be discouraged. Despite the innumerable failures you may yet master the difficult art of teaching others their place. Have you forgotten that wonderful lesson of a wonderful Teacher? There were once two ardent characters who liked to teach other people their places, and one of their methods was to call down lightning from heaven. It may have been then they were called Sons of

Thunder. Thunder and lightning go together and have always been characteristic of such teachers. Their own place, as one might expect, was to be up in heaven sending down the lightning. So, at least, their mother thought and applied for the position for the Sons of Thunder. As there were nearly ten other mothers and sons looking for the same place, there was at once an especially stormy session of the School for Teaching People their Places.

The Master of masters taught them all their place. Don't make others feel small but become so yourself, was the gist of His lesson. "If any man desire to be first, so shall he be the last of all and servant of all. . . . Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven."

IT HAS SLAIN ITS TEN THOUSANDS

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IRONY is the well-dressed and comparatively harmless brother of sarcasm. Irony smiles; sarcasm is sardonic. Irony may in its wildest moments wield a lancet or a rattan, medicinal, if menacing; the rough-handed brother is a bludgeon and a buzz-saw.

Sometimes, indeed, sarcasm is a means of defence, but so, too, is a sting, a fang, a claw, or the snap of sharp teeth. Unhappily, behind these weapons there is an irresponsible agent, and that it is which makes them formidable. So is it with sarcasm. The man who takes a pride in the glitter and edge of the dagger he loves to whet, will be tempted to display its burnished brightness and experiment with its sharpness. Sarcasm forgets the woes of its victim, while it exults in its own keenness and brilliancy. It assumes a superi-

ority which is maddening; and it will not only pierce its victim, but turn its weapon in the wound. Should it then be surprised if it roils the springs of human kindliness and draws to the turbid surface the refuse and mean sediment which virtue keeps suppressed. There is something of the strong man beating a woman, or of an angry man kicking a horse in the ungoverned sallies of sarcasm. The ocean travelers may admire the white spectre of an iceberg floating majestically on the waves; but it would be expecting too much disinterestedness in mankind to think that the travelers will turn and bless this icy brilliance when their vessel has been dealt a mortal wound, and they are engulfed in the chilled waters. The cold, sharp edges of sarcasm number more victims than have gone down before the icebergs of the sea.

Sarcasm has been the opening scene in many a domestic tragedy. A broken sleep, a disgruntled husband at breakfast, a nervous wife forgetting to put on the salt, the curled lip, unveiling a keen-edged tooth, the flash and bite of a sarcastic word — enough; the curtain falls in a divorce court. Do you hunger for

human affection; do you await the pleasure of trusting confidence? Then avoid sarcasm. The heart will expand and mellow in sunshine; it will not bare itself to a stiletto. A juggler whirling sharp knives cannot expect you to shake hands with him or, without fear of dire consequences to your nose, approach to kiss him. Imagine a man and wife or two sisters trying to embrace when both parties were keeping a dozen edged blades in the air. If you will be sarcastic, make up your mind to be a heart-hermit. The delicate bloom of confidence and loving trust will never grow on the red-hot coals of a furnace.

The teacher, the superior, the wife, the husband, the older brother or sister, the human being who impales his victim on the cross of sarcasm and then shouts, Vah! at him, will be eventually forgiven, it is to be hoped, but the high degree of virtue required for such forgiveness is not at present a drug on the market. To expect conversion of any kind from sarcasm, displays in the user exceptionally rare faith. Since the time Adam got sarcastic with Eve, or vice versa, sarcasm has made almost as many converts as there are moons to the earth

or suns in our planetary system or Christmases in one year. The sarcastic Herod did not deserve a word from Christ. Some Christian legends have canonized Pilate, but the devil's advocate had no trouble in excluding Herod from the roll of Saints.

FUMING AND FRETTING

FUMING AND FRETTING

DID you ever see such"; "Well, if that doesn't just"; "Wouldn't that"; "Will you look at"; "Of all the most"; "Whatever in the world"; these are pet phrases reserved for the man who fumes and frets. These are his stock in trade, indexed in the dictionary of fuming and fretting, forming the contents of the Handy Fumer and Fretter, sold everywhere. These are the words to which are sung the discords of fretting, and which bear to the ears of suffering humanity the sad wail of fuming. In schools the teacher sometimes sets as an exercise an unfinished sentence for the pupils to complete. The school of fuming and fretting has few vacations, and filling out the above phrases is its daily exercise.

Fume is tragic without any particular grounds for fury and gloom. Fret is as light and frothy as comedy, but, alas, never smiles.

Fume is masculine; fret is feminine, but there is no likelihood of matrimony. They will become respectively a crusty bachelor and a peppery shrew. They once began a courtship, but Mr. Fume blistered Miss Fret's cheek and Miss Fret came very near snapping off Mr. Fume's nose. So the prospective union was averted and no gifts were returned. None had been given. They were the original preventers of useless giving.

Rub two pieces of sandpaper together. The heat is fume and the rasp is fret. Some dismal, wintry night, when it is sloppy underfoot and sleety overhead, and a raw wind is moaning, and every one is gloomy, you hear a long-drawn whine of the gale at your window and the frame rattles angrily. That is the time fuming and fretting find their way into man's soul. The fume is the howling whine, and the angry rattle is the fret. If Darwin is right, the cur represents the highest evolution of fuming and fretting. These qualities are atrophied in saints and in the dead, but in curs they proved fittest to survive and give full aid in the struggle against pugnacious environment. Behold these two functions highly ideal-

ized and perfectly developed in the ugly snarl and the vicious snap.

Tell your neighbor who is fretting and fuming and mistaking his teapot for a typhoon generator, some of the wisdom of the ages. Tell him that "Rome was not built in a day." Say, "More haste less speed"; "One thing at a time"; "Make haste slowly." Alas, he has his answer ready, and he turns your wisdom back upon you and overwhelms you with excited and fiery exclamations about making hay and saving stitches and not putting off till to-morrow. Striking hot iron especially appeals to him. He likes a hammer and is delighted to get iron into such a state that he can beat it into any shape he chooses.

Herod fumed and fretted, and then dispatched an army to slaughter helpless babies. The Pharisees fretted and fumed until they, too, got murder into their hearts. Peter fumed and fretted himself, first into a fret of fervor, then into an unwatchful sleep, then into a dangerous occasion, then into curses and denials. Peter, however, stopped short of the treachery and murder found in other fuming and fretting, and with one look of his Lord the fumes

went up in repentance and the fret fled before humility.

When a man finds that every time he opens his eyelids, something he sees propels a speck of dust into his sensitive eye, or when he feels the grit of sand in every particle of food, or detects a fly in every ointment whose fragrance assails his nose, when, in a word, every one else and everything else is wrong about him and pressure is high and hot boxes threaten all wheels, no doubt there is need of a doctor, but in all cases there is more need of Him Who came to earth to do the most tremendous work ever attempted, the sanctification of mankind, and then waited for thirty years quietly and calmly before He started. Your fumer and fretter would have been able to suggest improvements to Omniscience and give assistance to Omnipotence. There were some who fumed and fretted and murmured against the Master of the House, but all their resentment and angry glances and galling burdens and sweating heats availed nothing. "They likewise received every man a penny."

A UNIVERSAL GENIUS

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A UNIVERSAL GENIUS

THIS introduces to you a versatile artist whose various accomplishments demand the powerul language of an adept press-agent for their adequate exploitation. Somewhere out of sight in every person is a strange being known as a habit. Habit is the greatest of all performers. No stage, no circus, no office could run an instant without habit. A man has ten fingers which are clumsy and awkward and act as though they were all one-jointed thumbs. Then comes habit and works its way into flesh and muscles and joints and nerves, and the leaden fingers fly over a typewriter and take on the speed and almost the very power of thought, or they follow master-minds on angel wings through the woven intricacies of the sublime harmony of music.

If habit can wing what is slow, what will it do to what is already swift? Coupled with every human need is a human desire, ready to

meet the need, eager to anticipate the need. These specialized desires are the passions of man. They are not like heavy feet which are to be made light by the habit of dancing, not like stiff fingers to be made supple by habits of music or other arts, not even like the lightning thoughts which are quite sluggish even when drilled by years of exercise into celerity of movement. But the passions, before habit comes, are already dextrous and agile and more speedy than light. Habit, then, is supreme when it fastens upon passion and focuses and intensifies and specializes what is already intense and concentrated. Habit raises selfishness to a throne to which the whole man bows down in abject slavery. Habit pampers a desire till it becomes a possession. By it man is resolved into a sleeping, waking, walking, speaking, thinking, dreaming thirst. He ceases to be a man; he becomes a corkscrew, a faucet, a vinous viaduct.

Think of the tactics of this universal genius. Habit is a consummate general and outflanks duty, surprises and triumphantly routs hosts of scruples. Doctors and pharmacists may compound their drugs in all ways and means,

they can never produce soporifics equal to those manufactured by habit. Habit clamors for perfect satisfaction, mental and moral as well as corporal. It is competent for the task and supplies to the soul an opiate to lull uneasy conscience to profound sleep. As a consulting physician, habit is unrivalled except that its bills for filling prescriptions are pretty high. Habit prescribes a smoke as an awakener and also as an inducer of somnolence. A smoke used to be an excellent appetizer and an indispensable digester, and now by advice of the specialist, habit, it accompanies all the courses of a meal. Between the acts will be abolished soon, in favor of a continuous performance. The cigarette will be the constant companion of the lorgnette.

Luckily our writers have not the powers of fiction possessed by habit, or we should be swamped in the deluge of "best-sellers." What unrivalled stories habit tells to its pet passion! What colors on its palette! What visions start into life under its brush! Demosthenes resorted to desperate measures, living in caves, torturing his body, roaring at the ocean, filling his mouth with pebbles, and all for what? To

win some powers of persuasion? Could he have gone to school to habit, he would have become the most persuasive of orators. He could argue a man into any kind of sickness or pain, which would demand instant and frequent internal applications of alcohol, and then argue all the trouble away again. This he could do as often as he wished. His audiences would have no prejudices to overcome; they never would be sleepy or tired; they would literally drink in his arguments and never be sated with the flow of his eloquence.

Where does habit get its marvelous powers? It is likely that flesh is able to perform all these wonders, unaided or coached by the example of the world, but it is more likely that the third of an unhallowed trio is an active abettor of habit. In fact the Good Book tells us that the soul can be swept and garnished and yet the evil spirit will come back with new recruits. Bad habit has the help of the whole seven more wicked spirits, and that accounts for some of its accomplishments.

NAGGING

NAGGING

SHE had, if I remember rightly, three small children whom she drove before her down the aisle of the railroad car to two empty seats near me. Her husband came after her and had with him many heavy evidences of a day's shopping in the city. Bundles, wraps and coats were laid aside, and all went well. Presently the brakeman announced a station, and the wife, who had asked the same question at every other announcement, again inquired of her husband, "Is this our station?" The poor fellow had the look of one who was haunted or hunted, or both, and with fatal precipitation, he said, "No!" He was wrong; it was their station, and when the station was shouted a second time though the car, the wife cast a look at her husband which might have broken the window-pane if it had missed him. "I asked you," she began, "and you told me it wasn't."

She repeated the same words again and again, now in his direction, now at the children, whom she was hurriedly pushing into their coats, then back at him: then at the bundles, which she caught up in awkward haste. The last I saw of them, he was trying to placate her, and she was making one answer to every argument and every motion: "But I asked you, didn't I? And you told me it wasn't!"

All this happened several years ago, but I have a presentiment that the tune, at whose birth I was sponsor, is still being sung. To tell the truth, she had my fullest sympathy, but now that the poor husband has heard that same tune to the same words and with the same intonation persistently chanted at him from that time to this, I feel for him. He deserved to be electrocuted, but he did not deserve to be tortured for life. She was a nagger.

A nagger is a person who has learnt one tune and then lost all ear for music. A nagger is a self-winding, single-record Victrola. Naggers are more like machines than like anything else; but if a parallel is desired in living things, any summer night by the sea, with the breeze off shore and no mosquito bars, will let loose upon

a sleeper a hundred insects of one tune and reiterant persistency.

People who nag have narrow horizons. If they lived on mountains their mole-hills would shrink to their proper dimensions. But they live in the same round of the same duties, and their minds, memories, hopes are always thrown in upon themselves. Like whirlpools, with every revolution they travel a narrower circle until the destructive currents sweep their victims to despair, drowning and death. The woman in the home, the teacher in the classroom, the small boy in a small office, the martinet in a new position, the baby with a toy drum, these furnish the world's supply of nagging. It may be asserted without fear of denial that this sad life could subsist on less of the supply. We wish nagging were as rare as radium; it is almost as deadly in its unceasing emanations.

An exception, perhaps, to the usual prerequisite of a narrow horizon may be found in newspaper nagging. As a rule, the standard of humor is so high in journalists that they do not fall into this dolorous, complaining rut. Yet newspapers may have fixed ideas as well

as individuals, and sometimes get — and deserve — the reputation of a common scold by persistently hounding one man. Education, travel, reading, humor, if possible, are some of the cures for nagging: the best of all is purgatory.

THEY ALSO RAN

THEY ALSO RAN

THERE is a sad class of people who deserve the sympathy of all men. It is made up of those who do not think of a thing first. They are just about to discover a new idea, propose a brilliant plan at a club-meeting, inaugurate a new scheme of public reform, when along comes some one else who takes the words out of their mouths, so to say, or even roots the idea out of their heads, just as it was about to flower. A young lad was receiving his first lesson in grammar. "You must not say," he was told, " 'me and Jim was there,' say 'Jim and I were there.' " "Oh," replied the boy sadly, "I don't like to be next." Who could have seen in "me and Jim" an illustration of early ambitions? Who does not see in the words a striking instance of the sadness of those whose doom it is always to be next?

If you are of that unhappy class, what do you intend to do? If a fellow-doctor antici-

pates you by a great discovery which you were on the point of making, will you assume an air of superior and severely professional cautiousness, reach for your glasses and microscope and get down into the very atoms of the article or address to see if there is not an ion missing, or will you gulp down the chagrin of being next and give the discovery an enthusiastic reception? If you do not get to the patent-office first, you may at least have the honor of proposing the first cheer. If not Columbus, you may be Isabella, and give your more agile companion jewels, not chains.

The competition in initiative is becoming more strenuous every day. Newspapers in their feverish endeavor not to be next, have resorted to wonderful devices. The "scoop" and the "beat" are their ideals of successful journalists. They have buried a Pope and given his dying words years before his death. They have printed the opening speech of the prosecution before the jury was chosen. Unhappily the Pope can not fine for contempt of the papacy, otherwise Peter's Pence would have a substantial increase. The State and national legislatures furnish the admiring world

with many exhibitions of uncommon bursts of speed on the part of rival reformers to get their legislation first before the House. Perhaps that strangest and most pitiable of all human frailties, the so-called *odium theologicum*, has partially its origin in disappointment at not being the first to have invented a new theory for solving the mysteries of some moral or dogmatic truth. When one thinks of the amenities displayed in discussing God's most gracious gifts to earth, he blushes for the weakness of men who forget charity, politeness and even decency rather than admit that others have thought of it first. From the committee in charge of one section of a church picnic up to the congregation of an ecumenical council you will find disappointed second-place men, and annoyingly triumphant individuals who thought of it first.

The teacher who has an inventive pupil, the employer who has an employee with initiative, the superior who is waited on by a subordinate with a new idea, all these may snub the unhappy persons that have anticipated them, or they may rise above the prevalent weakness of mankind. They may even model them-

selves, in their dealings with others, upon those magnificent duellists of humble love: the one telling disappointed followers, "He must increase but I must decrease"; the other submitting himself to be baptized: "Suffer it to be so now. For so it becometh us to fulfil all justice." These spiritual giants were great enough to be willing to do what was right. The place where they did it, first or second or last, was immaterial.

SEEING OURSELVES

SEEING OURSELVES

ONE of the few recorded prayers of a famous Scotch poet was to the effect that it would be a good thing to see ourselves as others see us. He, however, admitted that the results would not be conducive to devotion. Many another good thing, too, besides devotion, would go with this true reflection of ourself; self-satisfaction, glowing autobiographies, comforting assurances from consciousness, laudatory interviews with one's own recollections, patience and much unfounded contentment. "Why do you bring suit for libel two years after you were called a hippopotamus?" asked the judge. "Well, your honor," replied the plaintiff, "it was only yesterday that for the first time I saw the animal." The number of suits for libel against self-revelation would certainly crowd the docket if seeing ourseves as others see us came to be the fashion.

There are immense difficulties to producing in a man this true reflection of himself. How many editors have succeeded in making their rejected contributors see themselves as they have been seen? We pause for a reply, but as eternity is long, let us ask rather whether it is the mirror or my lady's eyes which are responsible for what parades the avenues. Here is a tale which gives one reason why self-ignorance has so long a life: There was once a lad who must have derived his ideas of man's anatomy from an onion. At any rate, he believed that every one grew up by building around himself another layer. If you peeled off the man, you could find, he thought, the boy. In certain cases there would be numerous layers, and the labor would be immense, for example, to get from an ex-president to a baby. But apply that notion to self and try to peel off the layers built up around the true knowledge of what you are. Take a cross section of your soul, and you would have to cut through successes, dreams, ideals, flatteries, congratulations, dotings of fond parents, ambitions, deceptions, various handshakings and shoulder-clappings of friends,

until you finally reached the shrunken and wrinkled kernel of self. No wonder the Greeks admired the man who said, Know thyself! and considered him one of the seven wise men of the world.

There was a certain Spanish soldier who had hidden himself behind a life of distractions, of loves, hates, gamblings, dissipations, day-dreamings, novel-reading, quarreling, soldiering. He broke down all those intrenchments and got to a knowledge of self, but it was a heroic struggle. The process started with a cannon-ball, and a surgical operation, and a long sickness, and the process ended by his giving up home and wealth and honors, by fasting and meditation on Christ's life and by many months of retirement alone in a cave. He wrote a book in which he formulated the science of seeing yourself as God sees you, which is an improvement on the Scotch formula. The Spaniard was Ignatius of Loyola; his recipe for self-knowledge is called a retreat. In those exercises he does not seem to have left out much of his own experience except the cannon-ball. He would likely use that

in extreme cases. Surgery, however, and prayer and fasting and exile and silence and caves of solitude are used to cut away self-deceptions. Besides this external surgery, as it might be called, there is an immense amount of internal surgery also, but we can not go into that here.

Retreats will not be popular until people cease to be afraid of hippopotamuses. There was a short retreat given once upon a time. The supreme excellence of the Director dispensed with long explanations. His exercitants saw themselves as God saw them, and they dropped their stones and went out one after another, beginning with the oldest. Self-seeing is a potent discourager of stone-throwing.

WHAT DO THEY SAY?

WHAT DO THEY SAY?

THE easiest way to make public opinion is to change "I say" into "they say." This might be called the reporter's "they" to correspond with the editor's "we." Many a weak cause has been shored up by this singular use of a plural pronoun. Many a bit of gossip has had a long lease of life, supported by the mysterious and formidable multitude which "they" constitutes. The story for which "I say" stands sponsor, dies in early infancy.

Yet there are cases where the single assertion of a single individual assumes almost the dimensions of national belief. It is a fact, amply proved by daily experience, that if a man persistently asserts something and spreads his statement broadcast by means of the press, his views will enter into the

body of contemporary thought and pass current as public opinion. P. T. Barnum seems to have been the discoverer of the psychological fact that people will take you at your own valuation if you give frequent expression to it. It would take a great deal of hardihood for the ordinary individual to deny that Barnum's was "the greatest show on earth." People feel that what is repeatedly put down in cold print can not possibly be untrue.

When the mail-carrier hears "they say" from the last house on his rural route, a house a mile from the main road, he will not find it hard to compute the number in "they." Arriving at town, he may add himself and a few at the post-office, and some at home and at the bar, until what "they say" spreads out in very wide circles from the dropping of a very little pebble. Then the local reporter gets the story, and the largest circulation in the county makes its thousand readers close their eyes and open wide their hungry minds and gulp down what their oracle of truth has proclaimed. So public opinion is formed.

This is the bogey which frightens so many into chills and fevers. "They say" has few terrors for a man whose travels mean more than going to town on market-day, and fewer terrors still for that intellectual traveler whose mind is conversant with the views and opinions of the world of letters. Those who know geography and history are not likely to identify R. D. 365 with the globe or Farmer Tassel with the human race. They are not like the irresponsible members of an impulsive mob which spontaneously re-echoes one voice by a thousand cheers, and discharges itself upon its victim, like a park of artillery, to the touch of one button. "They say" will not scare away any one who is acquainted with some millions who do not say.

A convert to Catholicity was very much worried about the views she heard expressed concerning her newly-adopted Church. She tried to alarm her servant, but that lifelong Catholic replied very calmly: "Sure, ma'am, the Church can stand it." What was the clamor of some contemporaries, however many, although they were more loud than numerous, what was *their* "say" to one who felt her

Catholicity, who touched elbows with 250,000,000 side by side with her and looked back to crowded ranks 2000 years deep, marked with the sign of salvation. What do *they* say?

FASTER, FASTER!

FASTER, FASTER!

STEP LIVELY! The trains of life are now running under one-second headway. The world does seem slow. To the young ladies who are to come out next year or graduate from school, the world appears to creep around the sun like a snail, but in order to satisfy the eagerness of the young hearts that poor old earth is traveling about 70,000 miles an hour to get to next year. Suppose a man were riding on a locomotive, going at the rate of two hundred miles an hour and were to step off in front of it. Before you begin to count the pieces think of this: the solid earth besides whirling around the sun with the speed just mentioned, spins around at the same time like a top in a very lively fashion. Now, imagine you stepped off the world and got in its way. The locomotive that would collide with you weighs six sextillion tons. (A sextillion is a figure with

twenty-one ciphers after it.) You would be pounded to fragments by mountains and combed fine by miles of forests and filtered into specks of dust by huge seas. Don't be frightened. You cannot step off the earth. But if you did, in one hour one thousand miles of this earth would have swept at you like a mammoth brush on whose tremendous bristles you would be danced. At eight o'clock, San Francisco would hit you; at nine Denver would collide with what was left; at ten Chicago would appropriately mince the particles; at eleven an atom or two of your precious personality would strike a New York sky-scraper. The time and place are approximate. Conclusion: the world is getting ahead, but don't get ahead of it!

Alas, even in your surviving atoms there is no rest. Within that narrow sphere ions and electrons are whirling and spinning with extraordinary rapidity. We rely upon Sir Ernest Rutherford and other eminent travelers in that scientific Lilliputia for those facts. We ourselves have never seen an ion go round. All things considered, however, the subway guard should be satisfied. The universe is

stepping lively. But speed conditions are not yet satisfactory. Speed has become a virtue desirable in itself. The destination is immaterial; the celerity is everything. Meals used to be a time of rest and talk, now they are taken with rush and tango. If you are discovered enjoying leisure, you are likely to be interviewed by the investigator of some financial foundation, as a possible victim of hook-worms. "That is not ease; that is a disease. You must keep up with the earth and the atom. Step lively!"

If you are elected to office, call a special session, put a time limit on talk, grease the legislative ways, launch a thousand laws with great hurrah, tour the country in an express train, with one-minute speeches at small settlements, five-minute harangues at towns, half-hour orations at cities, hire an automobile for the rural routes, and board an aeroplane for mountain resorts. The real reason, no doubt, why people are dissatisfied with our judges is that they are the only ones who move slow. They think. Why tolerate such a loss of time, when you can arrest, try, convict, condemn, and execute anybody at

once by acclamation and a gun? Ropes are too slow, and kerosene is good for getting rid of rubbish.

School means leisure in Greece; it means speed in America. Why should the valuable time of the nursery be lost? Hitting baby-brother with a rattle could be made a lesson in the mechanics of projectiles, and in the velocity of falling bodies. The attempt to swallow its big toe may be the first stirring of curiosity in ambitious youth. Satisfy that desire by a full course in sex hygiene. Why should infant phenomena be scarce and rare and found in one city alone? It was a medieval idea that it took time to mature and ripen. You tell me that a man can bake an apple in a few minutes, but can not ripen it in a few months. Nonsense, Mr. Burbank will soon provide us with early roast-apple trees.

What? "Time is needed for growth?" "The universe was not ready-made, but was gradually formed." "Rome was not built in twenty-four hours." "The world was not dragooned into Christianity, but slow was the growth of Christian Rome, too." "First

the blade, then the ear, afterwards the full wheat in the ear." Very true, sir, but you are now talking of things eternal, not of things earthly and diurnal. Here we are subway travelers and must step lively.

CHAFFING

CHAFFING

THERE was an ancient mariner who lived before the days scientific alienists began to answer long questions, and for that reason, among others, he was allowed to wander at large, to fix his glittering eye on his fellowman rather than on bars and blank walls, and to tell to fascinated hearers his one story, not simply to babble it to himself. There is, too, a modern mariner who resembles his ancient brother in having one story. Other resemblances may be left to the proper authorities. One lack of resemblance there is. The ancient mariner told his one story and sought another victim; the modern mariner has one story and one perpetual victim. The species we are attempting to classify is the chaffer.

The chaffer's haunts are the dinner-table, the boarding-house, the school-yard on a dull

day, the smoking room of the club, and other customary gathering places. When things are particularly dull, when people are tired of using their minds or have none to use, when conversation is slack, when there are no rumors in the air, no scandals, no reported wars, when the tide of intellectual life has reached the lowest ebb, down to wide stretches of unfragrant ooze, then the chaffer begins to prowl and the chaff begins to fly, and the chaffed begins to wince. Where is the chaffer's favorite hunting ground? It is found associated with some meek, inoffensive individual, whose powers of suffering are as long as a light year. Having chosen his victim and ascertained that he will not snap back, the chaffer brings out his well-threshed chaff, which will be some physical peculiarity of his meek prey, the place of his birth or residence, some happening of his past life, some quality, deficiency, or what not.

The listeners have heard it all before, but they must resurrect the same old smile, galvanize it into a new lease of life, spread it wearily over tired muscles and hold it charitably there while the chaffer goes on.

There are usually at hand one or two other sounding boxes who re-echo the noise of the chief chaffer. The victim? He is the dull stone upon which they sharpen old and blunt witticisms. He may be out of sorts and more than usually sensitive; he cannot complain. It is his vocation to fill intellectual vacuums. He must be ground down to make a road on which the chaffer may ride his hobby with comfort.

If there was only a little change, if the modern mariners would vary their story while keeping the same victim, why it would not be so bad. There was once a target for the chaffer's shafts, and for nearly fifteen years he felt himself pierced in the same identical spot. The spot, as might be conjectured, became somewhat tender. To the surprise of everybody, one day the target emitted a prolonged and deliberate howl. The participants had imagined that it was a fifteen years' picnic to be shot on the same spot. At all events, that particular archery practice was discontinued rather hurriedly, and the club has not met since.

It is our belief that a special mansion in

heaven is reserved for these victims of the modern gladiator, whereas the torturer and his grinning audience which wags its thumbs in approval of the torture, have reserved for them, we hope, at least, — a death-bed repentance. Let us leave them to the patron saint of the chaffed, that good, old prophet we read of many years ago, who was being chaffed by a crowd of small boys, and saw his tormenters devoured by wild bears.

"But wait," you say, "hasn't chaffing a curative value?" Yes, some, but the treatment is kept up too long, the fees are exorbitant. People sometimes prefer to die rather than to diet. "Ha," you reply, "I believe you have been chaffed yourself!" Never mind about that, but isn't it too bad that bears are so scarce?

TOO PROUD TO BE VAIN

TOO PROUD TO BE VAIN

VANITY loves to bask in the reflected glory of a mirror; pride has no need of such foolishness. It has for some time been aware of its own undimmed and undiminishable charms. Vanity is sixteen years of age; pride about thirty-five, old enough to have seen the silliness of vanity, not old enough to have experienced the silliness of self. These are ages of character, not of flesh and bone, and must be calculated by the records of common sense, not by the entries in the family Bible. If you cannot find the latter book, ask the grown-up daughters what has become of the birth-register. Vanity will know, because age is one of the points to which vanity is sensitive.

But let us proceed with the toilet. Vanity puts on bright ribbons, but pride considers all that superfluous. Pride is engaged in

disrobing others of their excellences, while vanity rushes into the latest Parisian horror. Not so, pride. Pride puts on a very severe gown, wears a very severe expression, adopts a very severe tone and preaches to a very severe gathering the total abolition of the male trust. The peacock vanity is preening its feathers, and radiating its rainbow splendors, while the owl pride, living in the obscurity of its own enlightenment, is blinking at the bright world about.

When they go out on the street, butterfly vanity wanders, and pride, the hawk, takes a straight course with high-raised head. Vanity sees everything and expects to be seen by everybody. Pride has eyes for one person alone, and wholly immersed in that self-satisfying contemplation, is oblivious to all else except occasionally when it condescends to brush aside impertinent trespassers upon its sacred studies. Vanity trips along, light, superficial creature, a brook of shallow, dancing water, always about to dash over its banks. Pride is gloomy and heavy, a dark pool of unknown depths, harboring creatures of the night.

When these distant relatives get into church, vanity starts for the front pew, and is glad to be late. It is delighted to be the drum-major in every procession, even if it must be drum-major at the end. Pride takes a rear seat where it can review the parade of "the rest of men." There pride severely condemns the giddiness of vanity, which is gazing about in all directions, only occasionally allowing its eyes to rest on the altar. Pride's eyes rarely stray aside, but pride's thoughts cannot afford any leisure for prayer. By the time pride has succeeded in measuring out the proper amount of mental condemnation due to the congregation, the sermon is beginning, and then the principal work for pride begins. Vanity does not hear the sermon; pride condemns it. If vanity would only stop long enough from comparing hat-fashions, or altar-fashions, or surplice-fashions, it would admit that it was a sinner. Pride is unlike the rest of mortals; it cannot sin. It has its own Mount Sinai and deals out at its own discretion laws and exemptions to itself. Making a rough guess on a subject, upon which guessing is alone possible, we may say

that vanity will perhaps get to Purgatory; pride will certainly — not arrive at Heaven.

Vanity therefore is a weakness; pride is a disease. Great men and good men have been vain of their abilities and their achievements. Great and good women have been vain too. Vanity was ridiculous in the man, but was easily forgiven in the woman. With pride the case is different. A proud man is feared; a proud woman is distinctly unpleasant.

THE FACT OF THE MATTER IS

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FIRST SCENE: Enter an ardent embodiment of enthusiasm, between eighteen and twenty years of age, the eyes aflame with a new idea. The voice thrills with an exultant note. A star has just floated within enthusiastic ken. The wings are poised for a glorious flight. The pulses of life beat rapturously, and their joyous tingling is felt even to the uttermost tips of restless, eager pinions.

Second Scene: Enter with a pronounced lowering of the temperature, A. Frost. His eyes are as mellow as an arc-light in winter, and his lips cut his words as though he was using a pair of plumber's shears for articulation. "The fact of the matter is," he avers pointedly and precisely, "there is no such star. That is a miasmic exhalation of submerged vegetation!"

Last Scene: Exit enthusiasm shivering from a discharge of cold water. The feathers are soaked and bedraggled; the wings are water-logged. Another eagle has been transformed into a hen for life, and the chiller of enthusiasm rubs his icy hands together gleefully.

If you would realize what the scientists mean by absolute zero, begin to praise some one in the presence of the matter-of-fact man. Incipient panegyrics, next to youthful enthusiasm, are his favorite prey. He will at once freeze into rigidity and become exceedingly cautious of all statements. Alleged events must be carefully scrutinized. "There were dozens," you say. "The fact of the matter is," you will be told, with ponderous gravity and crushing self-sufficiency, "there were only eleven, no more, no less." You feel your attempted praise is shrinking away, and you may felicitate yourself if, of all your wealth of congratulation, you have left what would constitute the Sunday contribution of a good Christian to his beloved pastor. History, science, logic and other things will suffer irretrievable ruin if any one should be

praised without the necessary limitations imposed by "matters of fact."

Enthusiasm makes this matter-of-fact man scornful; panegyric makes him indignant; sentiment infuriates him. "Can you weigh sentiment, or smell it, or put it in a test-tube, or throw it on a screen by the help of the most powerful, enlarging microscope?" "Sentiment," he sniffs; "sentiment!" Perhaps you will mention poetry. "Fiddlesticks!" Or wild flowers. "Bugs and hay-fever!" Or sunsets. "Fogs and rheumatism!" "Now sir, tell me, sir, what do you consider, sir, a good instance of useful sentiment for a practical man?" "A mother's heart," you reply, and that thaws off some of the chill for a time, at least.

This foe of the human heart, this natural enemy of sentiment and praise and enthusiasm, has had some interesting, if not noble, prototypes in the history of the world. There was once a very enthusiastic gathering where a father's heart overflowed in gushes of happiness. "This, my son," he cried, "was dead and has come to life again." "As a matter of fact, sir," he heard with a hissing

at his ear, "I do not recall that I ran through my money in the city. I do not at this moment remember any cabaret music, or roast veal for me at a banquet." There was also another banquet at which the chiller of enthusiasm was present. "She hath wrought a good work," said the ardent encourager of enthusiasm. "The fact of the matter is," said the chiller; "this ointment could be sold for three hundred pence." Are they who rob human hearts of enthusiasm and sentiment bearers, too, of a purse? Are they misers of the coin of praise, murmuring when it goes to others?

BETTERING BAD BARGAINS

BETTERING BAD BARGAINS

YOU are just looking over the purchase you have made at the bargain counter of life. It does not fit. The economy of modern raiment may preclude any cutting down for smaller members of the family. You are in despair. But why harden your heart with stoicism, when you might soften it with Christianity and so take up a better attitude toward the bargains of life? Divine Providence has not yet shown any inclination to anticipate heaven on this earth. All earthly bargains have some defects in them. There is no dairy without its spilt milk. The pessimist will enlarge the deluge by tears; the optimist will reflect that milk irrigates the grass or washes the floor and start in to fill another pail. Not long since in New Jersey a fire broke out. There was no water at hand and a milk-car was pressed into service successfully. That is the triumph

of failure when spilt milk becomes a fire extinguisher.

Nobody ever knew how many bargains were bad until the divorce courts opened their doors. Women are said to be experts at bargaining and at marrying. Then how are we to account for the number of packages marked: "return," "unsuitable," in the matrimonial market? Before the days of divorce people made the best of what they had. They did not begin to add up defects the very moment lace and orange-blossoms were laid aside for gingham and spinach. They kept their eyes riveted on the good points of their bargain until they got used to the bad ones. If the cloth was poor, the cut was good; if the sewing was botched, the buttons were lovely. When man and wife compared bargains, they saw that defects were balanced. If the shoe pinches, the last above is not always guilty, the foot may be at fault through size or sensitiveness. A shoemaker may be needed or a chiropodist, — or a little patience. Matrimony is heaven in the days of courtship, but after marriage it becomes a means of winning a higher place in

heaven. The man or woman who can not make the best of what they have, until death do them part, are too particular to be inhabitants of this earth.

If you have a wireless outfit, you can pick out of the air cries of distress from foundering vessels. Now some men make of themselves highly sensitized receivers of S. O. S. from every shipwreck of mankind: past, present or future. They have picked up all the sighs and sobs of history until life seems a funeral where everybody is a pall-bearer just one day before he occupies the hearse himself. These monopolists of woe will not let any tear dry but make it trickle into the Dead Sea of human sorrows. Every pain is recorded until mankind seems a festering wound and the earth a huge hospital. This is a useless, monotonous and decidedly lugubrious occupation. The only earth these people will ever have is the one they are now on. Why not make the best of it? Besides this work of making a census of sadness is being done accurately and fully without a lost tear, without a missed pain, without the unheard whisper of a single sigh. By whom? By

God's justice. That has fathomed the Dead Sea and knows its bitterness will be made sweet. That has proved the wounds of mankind and is sure of their ultimate healing. So then, Wireless Operators of woe, tune your instruments to laughter and sunshine, and let the justice of God worry about glumness and gloom.

Why, some are such adepts in making the best of a bad bargain that they exult over its very defects. They find a music in a sigh, rainbows in tears and pleasure in pain. They have very good precedent for this way of thinking, and they are acting upon excellent authority. Who was it that found mourning blessed and hunger blessed and persecution and reviling blessed? It was He Who at the mart of men made the worst possible purchase and yet turned it into the best, Who from death and disgrace made life and glory.

THE MITES AND THE MIGHTY

THE MITES AND THE MIGHTY

THE chemist will show you a pair of scales which will weigh your name. Balance the delicate scale-pans, putting a piece of paper on each. Remove one paper and write your name on it with lead pencil. Replace the paper, and this most exact machine will tell you the weight of lead used to write your name. Yet science deals with still finer subjects. Some years ago the lightest thing in existence, outside of the soul, which has no weight, was a hydrogen atom, nearly fifteen times lighter than air, and hundreds of times lighter than metal. Now the latest scientists tell you that an ion, which is a constituent element of the atom, is about two thousand times lighter than the hydrogen atom. To be exact, they say eighteen hundred, but no one will believe that we are trifling with the truth

if we enlarge some in dealing with such fine points as these.

Pretty small things in the scientific world! Very small, but gigantic when compared with spiritual smallness: with the microscopic eye which can detect a mote in another a mile away; with the meticulous mind which will send to a department store to find out what a present cost and will ignore the weight of love accompanying it; with the infinitesimal logic which can conclude to a vice from a virtue and assert that she must be bad when every one says she is good; with the parasitic and microbic soul which can nurse and ripen the minute germs of a moral plague and inoculate a neighborhood with the venom of jealousy and hate.

The time in which we live prides itself on its colossal accomplishments. It has climbed the highest mountains, but it has broken spinal columns in a foot-ball scrimmage; is it so generous in giving presents that men and women must organize to restrain themselves, but it will put poisoned pens to anonymous letters, and mail foul papers to Catholic neighbors; it has dis-

covered both poles of the earth, but it has seen its largest circulators hire perjured degenerates to vilify honesty and become receivers of stolen correspondence or patchers of torn mail for blackmail; it has witnessed waves of social uplift in politics and poverty, but it has armed the private detective with decoys, kodaks, and dictographs and has unveiled the unspeakable vileness of the divorce court. The age is big in protest and promise and professions, and it is exceedingly big in mighty mean meanness.

This catalog could be extended for any one who needs further conviction that souls are small to-day and do very small things. The age of chivalry has indeed passed. Yes, even the age of bandits and brigands has passed. Bad as they were, they had a largeness of soul which would not permit them to rob widows and orphans. We now live in a time that eavesdroppers, pick-pockets, peepers, letter-openers, garbage-gatherers, command high prices and find ready market for their wares.

The Pharisees received a severe scourging for their littleness of soul. Yet, let it be

said to their credit, they were minute on religious formalities. It is large to be exact with God, and they in many cases honestly thought they were serving God's interests by straining at a gnat. But the Pharisees never had their soul so shrunken, so dwarfed, as to burn down a house in Bethlehem because they were not permitted to hold a meeting in Jerusalem, or destroy the letters of an unknown Judean because some Galilean did not do what they wanted, or ruin a picnic ground where all went for pleasure simply because they did not have their own way in something else. Such petty acts of unmitigated meanness are the discoveries of our broad and enlightened age. The Providence that can detect and number the hairs of the head when they fall, will have to enlarge its magnifying powers to find certain tiny, contemporary souls, who are proving their fitness for civic duties by setting all duties and laws at naught.

A NOVEL POPE

A NOVEL POPE

THE man who knows it all has a degree from the university of self-consciousness, conferred by an unanimous vote of all the faculties, and received with salvos of applause by a delighted, if not numerous, audience. Having been made in this way an accredited ambassador to the human race, he undertakes light-heartedly his trifling task of setting the world right.

The popular novelist is the chief modern representative of a class which dates back to Eve, the first who wanted to "know it all." The novelist writes a story on the evils of rag-picking and introduces a number of thrilling descriptions of the back-yards of a great city, and moralizes over uncleanliness and all that. The novel is an instantaneous and complete success — in the advertising column. At once the back-yard specialist is equipped with unlimited stores of knowl-

edge. He qualifies for every political office and is suggested as a successor in a university to the antiquated professor who has written a collection of unread volumes on arts and sciences, but is unacquainted with the hitherto unfathomed and uncharted possibilities of real life.

The "best-seller" disdains these attempts to relegate him into comparative obscurity. His vocation is to impart the principles of government to his native country. An expert in ruins, he will be supreme in restoration. After reading more glowing reports from the press-agent, the novelist now feels competent to undertake a task which has been waiting this long while for his advent. There is the Pope of Rome who needs coaching; there are philosophy and theology which call for a thorough overhauling and a few coats of fresh paint; then he feels that the subject of the Ten Commandments has not received adequate treatment. Their Author did well, but many years have passed since these laws were formulated, and a live, "up-to-date" thinker must take hold and by progressive amendments make them contemporary with

new thought. The next Ecumenical Council of the Church will be addressed by such eminent theologians as Whole Cane, John Liverpool, Cora Lee, and other graduates of the Novel School of Divinity.

The editor used to be the typical specimen of this erudite class, but his glory is now eclipsed. The drummer was another interesting species of the tribe. High Schools in various parts of the country furnish a large supply of candidates for the same honor. The careful cataloging of feline bones or a sniff at some test-tubes has succeeded in making children high and mighty, and their parents infinitesimal mites. All these, however, are only omniscient; the novelist is a self-created and self-sustained genius, made out of nothing, and most omniscient.

There is one sovereign remedy for the new novelist, intoxicated by the plaudits of friends and the puffs of the advertiser. By knowing a little, he came to know everything; when he knows more, he will know less. The writer who is suffering from the subtle disease of one successful novel, will be cured by writing two dozen novels and by growing

older. He may then get an inkling of the experience and wisdom that has come with centuries of age and multitudes of volumes. The Sunday newspapers might in that event have fewer schemes for the instant, complete and perfect amelioration of mankind and all its institutions. The Catholic Church might have fewer amendments to worry about; the Pope might not be chagrined over his comparatively insignificant infallability. Indeed, it takes time to discover the fact that the High School is not life, that the beating of a "cub-reporter" into shape is not a guarantee of logic or ethics, and that the best of best-sellers is no successful substitute for a course of theology, or a well-founded charter entitling one to remake the universe. But with time we should cease to behold the diverting spectacle of a two-thousand-year-old pupil going to school to a two-year-old teacher; or of the Pope of Rome coached in his office by an infallibility conferred through thirty-five large printings and translations into all modern languages, including the Scandinavian.

CHUCKLING TO ONESELF

CHUCKLING TO ONESELF

IN novels men are often described as chuckling to themselves. The operation is a healthy and holy one and should be transplanted from fiction to real life. A man makes a fool of himself so often that if he is not in the habit of chuckling to himself he is lost. Take yourself too seriously and what a score of torments you are preparing for yourself! You might just as well take the eyelids from your eyes or cover your feet with sensitive excrescences and walk into the car crush after work is over. Do you prefer to wince and weep, or emit a chuckle? It is a popular pastime for rejected suitors to shoot the young lady in the case and then themselves. If these young men — they are always green, callow and conceited — had learned the art of chuckling to themselves, they would have saved good powder and would have had a sweeter revenge for

their rejection, especially in case their chuckles were loud enough and lasted long enough to get another bride. There is the best revenge! A saving sense of humor has lessened the list of suicides, and chuckling to oneself is humor welling and bubbling and sparkling in the open air.

Do women ever chuckle to themselves? In novels we do not think they do. In real life the time of chuckling for women begins about the age of eighty. This profound psychological fact accounts for grotesque fashions, militant suffragettes, gossip, family jars, hoity-toity scenes, tantrums and a few other female foibles. If you would stage an averted catastrophe in family life, proceed thus: "John, the way our children —" Here John chuckles to himself, "The clothes I have, John —" Same business for John. "You are paying no attention, you horrid —" John still at it. At this point Jane leaves abruptly and the door rattles in harmony with John's chuckle. Second scene occurs later in the day. Jane to Mrs. Hemphy: "I am in despair. I cannot get the least satisfaction out of that man of

mine. He grins like an idiot, and it is so ludicrous I have to rush away in anger lest I laugh outright."

Here is a test for you, ladies. Imagine yourself walking down a crowded street with a size-tag in a prominent place on the back of your dress. I don't mean one of those embroidered labels of a fashionable milliner often accidentally (?) displayed over the church-pew, but a real, vulgar tag with 78 or 96 on it. Having walked through the street with that, could you chuckle to yourself? I know a man who carried a tag that way, on his coat, and about ten years after the event he could remember it without getting mad; later he even chuckled. When would this last action take place in your case?

There is one class of people who make a science of chuckling to themselves. They are the saints. St. Francis de Sales said once that he felt like taking his heart in his hands and throwing it at some one. He did not. "Many bees in many days make a little honey. I won't throw away my hive of patience." There you have it. A chuckle

is not a cackle or a sneer that runs you through with icicles. A chuckle is a good-natured, unctuous thing, with all the oil and all the gold of a laugh, but with none of a laugh's noise. It is humorous humility, patience put to music. It is honey-hived by experience and sweetened by charity, and when you part your lips to chuckle to yourself, you show the world the golden honey in the white comb.

NOT AT HOME

NOT AT HOME

PEOPLE get away from cities that are to be besieged, or from States where war is to rage, or from plague-stricken lands, or from houses on fire, and they leave in a hurry, not minding the expense. With more expense, with more energy, with more persistent efforts people are trying every day to get away from themselves. Cain, the murderer, figures in our dreams as a wanderer over the face of the earth, shunning the haunts of human life and trembling at the footfall of a man. But his wanderings are limited when compared with the wide journeys many a soul will take to avoid catching sight of itself. A congressman not long ago told an incident of a negro who had been indulging too much in liquor. He imagined he was pursued by a horrible spectre. He ran with the swiftness of the wind, thinking he had outstripped his pursuer, but just

as he paused, he heard a mocking voice over his shoulder, "Ha, you ran pretty fast then." There was a man behind him carrying his head on his hands! The hard drinker made off again, shouting: "That is nothing to the way I am going to run now." The world may increase in speed, in all modes of travel, but it can never go fast enough for those who want to get away from themselves. The world has many who are afraid to look over their shoulders, and they travel swiftly from home. But some day they will stop.

Hundreds of letters to read and answer, thousands of figures to add up, customers and floor-walkers to satisfy, machines to make or to manage, products of various kinds of manufacture, to sell, to pack up, or to deliver, these are the stranglers of self-consciousness under the eight-hour law. Alas! the thoughts are awaiting open-shop and close-shop men as they get to the street. "Here, boy, a paper, quick!" Then a dive into the subway and a dive into the news, and the thoughts of self are baffled. But the time of thought will come. You wait and see.

Business and work give way to dissipation,

and dissipation gives way to work and business. It is strain and stimulus and strain again until the break comes. The world rushes from the Arctic of life's work to the torrid equator of life's follies. There is no temperate zone of recollection and repose on life's globe. Every inhabitant must get away from thoughts of self. He will work them away and read them away, or gamble and play, or drink and drug them away. He will travel or hunt or fish them away, but away they must go. They will, however, return one day.

America has the largest scrap-heap of any nation. There is always some new kind of building which necessitates tearing down the old, some new kind of equipment which obliges a man to tear out the old, some new kind of transportation which means tearing up the old. Perhaps it is this spirit of restlessness which has got into matrimony and has given America, that is, the United States of the same, the largest matrimonial scrap-heap of the world. Certainly it is that spirit which has filled the tingling nerves and brimming veins of modern men and promises to

give America the record for the largest scrap-heap of discarded men. To get away from one's thoughts, a million swift desires are unloosed and pampered and satisfied. Old thought, the snail, is indeed a slow traveler. He may crawl after the swift vehicle of desire, but he will finally overtake it and sit down face to face with the owner of the car as he sadly surveys its shattered fragments.

St. James complained of one that took a single look at himself and straightway forgot what manner of man he was! What would he say to-day when people avoid even taking one glance into the mirror of self? Exile and sickness make some people see themselves. St. Helena sobered Napoleon. Pampeluna and Manresa sanctified Loyola. Death and judgment are needed to furnish a mirror for others and to burnish its surface to reflect themselves fully and perfectly. May those selves be worth looking at eternally! Because, then, my friend, you can not get away from thoughts of self. Your thoughts have come home and they will stay there.

YOU WERE RIGHT

YOU WERE RIGHT

THREE monosyllables with the selection of easily pronounced vowels and consonants, yet what an agony their enumeration entails! Professors of elocution, schools of stammering, reformers of spelling, please take notice and solve this mystery of oral delivery. Can you not devise some means by which it will not be necessary for a man to have recourse to fortifying tonics or pass a season at a sanitarium in order to be able to say these three simple English words without gasping, without getting red in the face and without mopping a moist forehead? Theoretically, everyone, without exception, can go wrong; practically, everyone, with one limited exception, does go wrong, and when it comes to a question of personal opinions and individual actions, the number of popes is unlimited.

There is a fairy story told about a cashier

in a New York house who refused to take back some money when he made a mistake in change. It would be fatal to his profession and upset his bookkeeping to say to his customer, "You were right." He said "I was right." It is impossible to verify this story, which imposes on us the necessity of believing that a cashier would not take money, but the incident shows us that the difficulty in the use of these three words is not one of pronunciation, but one of grammar. Grammarians tell us that irregular verbs arose because some of their persons and tenses were used frequently and were thought to be the only parts of the verb, while other persons and tenses were used so rarely that they were thought to have ceased to be parts of the verb. It is very hard to conjugate the verb, "to be right." It has no second person in the past tense. It is an irregular verb.

Consider the difficulty of large bodies saying, "You were right." Newspapers identify themselves with their numerous readers. Is the phrase: "You were right" stereotyped in any newspaper office? Politicians speak for their parties, and parties

never are, never have been, never will be wrong. They sometimes observe a discreet silence or hurry over an incident, as a man will quicken his pace in a gloomy and dangerous place. Politicians may sometimes say in very guarded phrases that information was meagre, that it is quite possible that the party was not always in complete accord with what more mature deliberations, if opportunity had been offered for long thinking, would have perhaps suggested; but what politician has got as far as to say, "I was mistaken," much less, "You were right"?

If a politician makes such a statement, a nation never does. There was once a revolution that broke out on a certain narrow portion of the North American Continent. By a strange coincidence this great nation immediately recognized and upheld by its armies the small revolting fraction of a large state. Everyone outside the nation smiles significantly at the remarkable coincidences. Everyone in the nation knows in his heart individually that the transaction was not just what it should have been, and a large number would admit that it was wrong. But

let any one use in public a phrase which could remotely suggest that the nation could intimate: "You were right," and immediately there is an upheaval and explosion of ink and paper, with deafening detonations of flamboyant oratory all over the country.

The Prodigal confessed he was wrong. Peter cried, "You were right!" Judas did not get so far. He said, "I was wrong," but shrank from admitting the fact to another. A modern poet has described hell as a sad realization of the lost days and lost opportunities of life. One after another these days point accusing fingers at the doomed man. They are his murdered selves, but he, the murderer, is left looking at his victim forever. "And thou thyself for all eternity." This is everlasting torment: to be forced to say, when to say it is fruitless: "You were right."

STARTING A CONVERSATION

STARTING A CONVERSATION

THIS is a work that has to be done so often that it is surprising no one has made a thorough study of the subject and reduced it to rule. The various chess-openings have been systematized and named. There is hardly any trade or sport in which the opening attack has not been carefully considered. The college graduate knows what to do if he wins the toss in football or debate. What will he do if he has the first inning in a conversation? He can not tell you. He looks over his list of electives and does not find conversation among them.

But you will say that the opening of conversation has already been determined by the common practice of the human race. Different languages may vary the expression, but the idea remains the same. The German

may inquire about your "going," the Frenchman about your "carrying," the Englishman about your "being," but they all refer politely to health. Health is by every right of custom, tradition, history and ethnology the universally accepted opening of all conversations. We may as well admit at once that the fact can not be denied, but we might, in the language of logic, distinguish the terms and deny the consequences. We shall do so equivalently by referring to the title just above. We said starter, not opener. Everybody knows that the health question is just a tuning up, or what might be called a clearing of the throat, a sort of conversational nod. The real work remains after the health preliminaries have been dismissed.

We now offer our topic, which is a successful starter of conversation and is equally successful in continuing and concluding the same duty of mankind. The topic is the "common enemy." Strangers have to skirmish a little to find the common enemy. When the nationalities of each of the parties to the conversation are known, they at once have a large subject for discussion in the

weaknesses of a second or third nation. Before that fertile subject is exhausted, the combatants know one another's cities, and with other nations disposed of, the character of other cities is located, brought within range, and riddled by an unflagging bombardment. If the conversers are neighbors, they have the people next door; if they are fellow-boarders, they have the people in the next room.

Our topic is somewhat slow in getting under way where the conversation is between entire strangers. But its best performance can be seen where old friends meet. Here there is no skirmishing or diplomacy or mediation; hostilities are immediate. "Mrs. So-and-so is at her old tricks." "I suppose you heard the latest about Hittem." There is a glance or two around, a drawing together of chairs, a lowering of voices, and the stage is set for a successful conversation and killing. It becomes somewhat embarrassing and tragic at times, if one talker has to sacrifice a personal friend. But there is compensation. The other will gladly allow a friend to go up in smoke for the sake of promoting extensive

conversation. The accepted ending of the scene is phrased in the sentence: "Now, remember, this is all *entre nous*." The last words are French and are translated: "Touch it up and give it to the Associated Press."

You will fail if you try to start a conversation or keep it up by praising others. Some persons can not pronounce one word and some can not pronounce another, but no one seems to be able to pronounce praises. The common enemy is the unfailing, ever reliable topic. You remember that Pilate and Herod had not spoken for a long time. They finally found their tongues when they got a common enemy. Their first conversation, no doubt, interlarded with words such as "fool," "malefactor," was the crucifixion of Christ's character.

PUBLICITY AS A PANACEA

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IF publicity has all the curative powers its advocates claim for it, then we may expect soon a radical and complete improvement in morality. Publicity is administered in adult doses during all the year, and with the advent of the fall elections we expect an increase in the dosage by way of campaign capsules. Indeed, with the vast modern manufactory of publicity at work in press, platform, and pulpit, we are surfeited with the panacea.

The time has come to subject this new modern remedy to analysis. Does publicity cure? Light and air are the great means of physical health. The deadly microbe thrives in the dark. Is there an analogy in the moral order? It we let in the light, shall we destroy the germs that attack the moral constitution? No remedy has had a better chance to have

its merits tested than publicity. The press has been supplying us with it every day in constantly increasing quantities. We should be immune to all moral diseases, but we do not seem to be. The stage for antitoxin to develop has come; the recuperative powers of the moral nature should long ago have asserted themselves; there should at least be premonitory signs of convalescence, but the latest bulletin from the sick-room of the great patient, the world's conscience, indicates no improvement, rather records a deterioration. Divorce has had publicity applied in every shape and form; the plague is increasing. Lynching has had ample opportunities to try the cure; the patient is no better. In fact, there is not a moral disease on the calendar to which the remedy has not been applied. The result is always the same. Any innocuous patent medicine on the market can produce more certified cures in a day than publicity has made in a century.

Facts show that publicity does not cure. Reason will show that it can not cure. Indeed, publicity seems rather to be a poison than a panacea. A recent writer has declared

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that a knowledge of physiology has helped to decrease motherhood. People who advocate publicity forget that if you expose a crime, you expose also the methods of the criminal. The fate of the exposed may deter some from the path of ruin, but may teach others to follow more skillfully the way pointed out. "Don't get caught" is a principle that will make men cautious, but it will not make them conscientious. The correlative of publicity is human respect, and human respect is successful in making hypocrites, not in curing moral degenerates. Publicity leads to legislation, and mere legislation is not medicine but quackery.

The fault with all these panaceas and new methods of reform is the same. They fail to include an essential element in their prescriptions. The only panacea of reform is conscience; when the remedies of reform are subjected to analysis, and you find in the classification of constituent elements that there is of conscience not even a trace, then you may throw away the contents of your test-tube, and begin your experiments all over again. If you leave out conscience, there can be no reform. There may be pretence; there

may be hypocrisy; there may be a delusive, temporary improvement, but in the last analysis you must have conscience, if you would have true, sincere reform. The germ that causes moral degeneracy is lack of conscience, and publicity is not the serum to inoculate men. Back to conscience we must go for our correctives, and back to Christ for our consciences. "Instaurare omnia in Christo" were the first public words of Pope Pius X; "instaurare omnia in Christo" are the last words on the question of moral panaceas.

NOBODY CARES

NOBODY CARES

THIS is a sad cry to utter. When a man or a woman allows that complaint to take shape in the soul and fill the mouth with its bitterness, you may be sure that it is a black, severe storm which has flung such salt spray to the lips. Loneliness goes deep in the human heart. Man is a gregarious animal, and he loves to flock with his kind. Even if you maroon him in mid-ocean, he will not yet say, "Nobody cares." Enoch Arden did not utter those sad words, when he looked over miles of ocean, but he did, when he looked a few feet into a lighted room and saw his wife and children belonging to another. One need not be a chip on the high seas to be alone. The stranger in a large city feels his isolation all the more because millions around him are going somewhere and he is heading nowhere. They exchange with daily definiteness home for work and

work for home, and in both they meet some who care. It is the man who is away from home and business that feels himself a drifting waif on these shifting tides of life. The blaze of the saloon, the hilarious music and dancing, the shrillness of forced laughter, make an irresistible appeal to his loneliness. When John visits the city, he may easily become Don Juan. He finds that the doors on the saloon are light and easy-swinging and yield to a finger touch, while it takes several strong arms to push open the heavy church doors. "Nobody cares," is often found just before: "Here goes," in the text of many biographies.

The famous Haroun al Raschid, who lived in golden days, used to wander around on Arabian nights and visit the poor of his city. He was an early Oriental slummer. No doubt, he was charitably inclined towards others, but he was also practicing a very high kind of charity towards himself. Men in high office have to be very much alone, and Haroun was a founder of a "get-together club." Our good President took the country, that is, the newspaper reporters, into his confidence not so long ago and gave no uncertain evi-

dence that he felt the isolation of his position. How would he have felt if he were the Pope whom Italian compatriots, with no pity for his seclusion of office, have restricted still more to a single house and single garden. One of the sad privileges of old age is attending more funerals than dances, and the old must often shake their heads sadly whispering, "What does my presence matter? Nobody cares." Criminals too feel the spell of this attraction for their kind. When they have slipped through the widely ramified meshes of the law, when they have escaped the scent of the blood-hound, the patient detectives know the weakness of the human heart. It is a pitiful necessity which makes these agents of the law pounce down on their prey as it goes back from its lonely isolation to someone who cares.

There are several ways of breaking down the barriers of isolation all more helpful than dissipation or despair. When the aloofness of office or the helplessness of old age do not allow one to be the hail-fellow well met of college days, when the body narrows its horizon, the mind can widen its horizon. If

you cannot boisterously slap your chums on the shoulder, you can along the broad highways of literature clasp hands of fellowship with the myriads who throng those goodly ways. The one who reads has correspondence from all places and persons and times, and the mail is heavy.

Further and better! If it is hard to maroon the mind it is harder to maroon the heart. Give a mother the love of one child and she is never lonely. The soldier out on the picket-line or scouting alone, bears warm within him the trust of his leader and feels no isolation. If with under-water cables and overhead wireless one throb of electricity makes the whole world kin, there is a swifter message, a more sensitive response and far stronger bonds from heart to heart. Would you never be lonely, never isolated, then make the heart keenly alive toward Him Who always cares. With Him you can never be marooned or alone, but rather will be a multitude. "One with God is a majority," said an American orator, and an earlier and greater has written: "Casting all your cares on Him, for He hath care of you."

BORROWING TROUBLE

BORROWING TROUBLE

ONE day you start to read a document sent you through the mail and your hair begins to stand on end. How ignorant you have been of the fact that dangers threaten you on all sides! You hear of bankrupt business, ruined homes, broken hearts and new-made graves. You are told to behold the lands denuded of their primeval forests, the teeming rivers run dry, the once laughing population decimated by plagues, the prodigals swarming on the park-benches, while the elder sons at home are twiddling their fingers and knocking their heels together in helpless idleness under tottering roofs. Volcanoes, tidal-waves, conflagrations, earthquakes, droughts, cloud-bursts, typhoons, simoons, deadly siroccos are simultaneously and desperately attacking your fellow-countrymen. "It is the Black and Blue Peril upon us," you shriek in horror. "Who are the monsters doing all this?" You

turn back to the title-page and you find with some relief that you have been reading Campaign Document No. 789. You recall that an election is coming on, and at such an important time a politician is a borrower of trouble, second to none, if he happens to be out of office. Put him in office, and he sets aside his blue glasses for rosy ones.

Your young poet is an expert borrower of trouble. He loves to round up flocks of woes into the precincts of his verse. He is always "holding the 'phone" for the "still, sad music of humanity." Some other mourners are not contented with inheriting all the sorrows of the past and annexing all contemporary gloom, but they must get an option on the sadness of posterity. It was a peculiarly susceptible Chinamen, who at a birthday party given to about fifty relatives, was found shedding copious tears. When anxious inquirers began to search for the head-waters of this new river, they were informed that the host was weeping because he had just realized that in two hundred years he would have so many relatives he would be unable to accommodate them all in his house.

China ought to have the prize in the International Contest of Trouble Borrowers, but in this lugubrious competition the place of honor must be awarded to the mother of a first child, or an only one. After an Irish dozen of children the faculty for borrowing trouble grows tired and stops working, but with the first one nothing except the conglomerate of horrors which Shakespeare's witches put into their cauldrons to the tune of "double, double, toil and trouble," or perhaps the catalog of miseries which can be healed by the latest patent medicine, can exceed in variety and malignancy the choice collection of troubles which a fond mother will conjure up in a minute around her darling. She stands at the door through which her offspring has wandered, and as with dry-eyed despair she faces the wide, wide world, she is benumbed by the multiplied possibilities of disaster with which civilization has armed itself against her single treasure. The universality of her apprehensions is on a par with that of the Irishman whose drove of pigs escaped from him and left him crying out in dismay: "They will run up all manner of streets!" So will

her darling, and automobiles go on forever.

For this pessimistic proclivity the old adage gave as a remedy the sage advice: Do not cross any bridges until you come to them. The great English dramatist, seeing the uncertainty of the affairs of men, has his two pagan characters "reason with the worst that may befall." A good rule that, if the reasoning is on Christian and not pagan principles, as in the play! Better, however, than all proverbs and plays are the words of Him Who borrowed others' troubles in order to lighten them. Such borrowings are safe and lucrative investments, but to borrow trouble, in order to add blindly to one's own, spells bankruptcy. Therefore, we are told: "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." The Cross indeed must be borne, but its heavier weight rests on Him, and there is no doubt a special significance in the fact that we are told not to burden our shoulders for life. "Take up your cross daily." Don't borrow three hundred and sixty-four other crosses. Perhaps there will be only one.

WILL HYGIENE

WILL-HYGIENE

MERE knowledge will never succeed in checking or correcting crime, the press to the contrary notwithstanding. What everyone knows is not what everyone wills, much less what everyone does. The shameless publicity of the divorce courts has not lessened the number of divorces; the daily exposure of the "man higher up" has not stopped the looting of the public funds, and so on to the end of the chapter. In the same way, though, the advertising columns of the papers are crowded with notices of books which profess to unveil all secrets of knowledge to everybody: "What Boys Should Know," "What Girls Should Know," "What Men Should Know," it is more than evident that no corresponding betterment of morals has resulted. We are foolish in relegating to the attics of the mind as so much mental junk the wise reticence of

the past in matters of crime. "I know the higher way; I give it the sanction of my approval," said Ovid, "but I follow the lower." Shakespeare has told us of the pastors who point out to others the path of righteousness while they themselves "the primrose path of dalliance tread," and there is a still more potent authority on that topic, if it were needed. "I see another law in my members fighting against the law of my mind and captivating me." St. Paul puts the issue clearly. It is not the law of the mind which needs strengthening, but the law of the members that needs restraining; not more knowledge, but more will is required. In the very lesson in which you reveal the evils of sensual indulgence, you are likely to elicit the attractiveness of sensual gratification. The evils are remote; the pleasure is present and insistent. The drunkard in presence of temptation is not going to be saved from his indulgence by tables of statistics.

There are indeed evils in ignorance, but the evils of premature knowledge are more numerous and more disastrous. This is especially true in the matter of purity, which is at stake

in the school training of what is called sex-hygiene. The few broad facts which mother and father must and do impart in the ordinary training of the home will be sufficient for the vast majority; and all sensible people know that the most wholesome thing for the child is to forget the facts of sex and not have them obtruded on his attention. Early enlightenment may develop more the law of the members than the law of the mind.

There is, however, a course of sex-hygiene which all can safely follow and safely recommend. Instead of being worried about increasing the knowledge, be energetic and persistent in decreasing the desire. The man with murder in his heart will be cured by getting the murder out of his heart, not by dangling a noose before his eyes. It is the incentive that should be removed. The medicine will come too late. What will your anatomical exhibits in the class-room avail if the bill-boards, the shop-windows, the trolley cars, the advertising columns, the shameless fashions, the facts of sensational journalism, the fiction of sensational magazines, keep passions in a ferment? Inflamed desires make little

of disease and death; they clamor for indulgence. Let the sex-hygienist put away the countless seductions which assail mankind and womankind on all sides and they will effect something. Let the young have less desire, not more knowledge; strength of will, not complete information.

TALKING TO ONESELF

TALKING TO ONESELF

AN ordinary man looks around and makes sure no one is present before he begins to talk to himself. He knows that talking to oneself is considered a sign of a weak mind. Yet, why should the soliloquy be excluded from public? You may sing, you may whistle, you may tap your fingers idly or impatiently, you may play a musical instrument, but you may not let your thoughts rise above their very subdued whisper unless you are in complete privacy. "I beg pardon, did you say anything?" we may perhaps hear and with a blush of shame at being caught talking aloud to ourselves, we hastily reply, "Nothing at all." We are afraid of being classed with the weak-minded. Why, to-day, they are excluding the soliloquy even from the stage, and when dictographs become cheaper, a man will not dare to swear even in private. The

speaker will not address the sides of his taxi-cab with the splendid retort, the brilliant epigram and crushing argument which unhappily did not come half an hour before. The man who bumps his toe in the dark will choke his rebellious thoughts to silence. That business plan which is going to overwhelm your rivals, that anticipated exultation in the joys of the new honor you are ambitioning, can be given no expression. You may gesticulate and move your lips with the explosive vehemence of a character talking in a moving-picture, but may not speak aloud, or the dictograph "will get you if you don't watch out."

There is no special reason for sorrow over the fact that the art of speaking to oneself is disappearing. It may even be a thing to be thankful for that many a ridiculous fury kindled to vehemence by personal and private eloquence will be quenched through lack of verbal fuel. The triumphant answers to pet enemies may be less frequent because their authors have ceased rehearsing them to themselves. It is very hard to refrain from uttering to other audiences what has been so often

applauded by enthusiastic self. The thought which has been allowed to utter itself in sound is not far from launching itself in act. If wickedness loses its voice, it may be so weakened as to lose the power of thinking.

Anger and fear indulge, more than contentment does, in talking to self. It is naturally hard to know the vocabulary of a language which is spoken only to one, but if we may judge by personal tendencies ninety-nine per cent of the words uttered to oneself are not fit for polite society. The caddy who said that a golfer on a certain trying occasion had recourse to the most profane silence he ever witnessed, fortunately prevented by his presence some interesting additions to the language of intense emotion. A private explosion may indeed relieve the overcharged heart, but it may also stir up a languishing resentment to more vigorous action. Put your finger on the lips of fear when it would talk to you in private and you will probably spare yourself the painful toil of traveling over various bridges which in reality you shall never cross. Indulge in the silent satisfaction of calm and peaceful joy.

When the pagans were alone, they talked to the trees or the springs or the waves, in all of which they believed guardian spirits existed. When the poets are alone, they talk a great deal to inanimate nature, if we may believe what they put into print. Those of us who are not pagans or poets have a more consoling and comforting practice when alone, and it is guaranteed to do away with all need of talking to oneself. "Enter into thy chamber and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret and thy Father Who seeth in secret will repay thee."

JUST AS YOU SAY

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THIS title is a short formula for civilization. The words herald the substitution of deference for force, of charity for selfishness, of obedience for wilfulness. The young find them hard to utter; the old, easier. When ideas are new in the mind, when hope is dazzling bright and difficulties disappear in its splendor, when experience is limited, then the lips with difficulty shape these words. But test the exultant plans by the acid of experience, sober enthusiasm by the humility of failure, broaden sympathy by the knowledge that comes with years, and most men and women will anticipate their own objections or prejudices and cry, "Just as you say." Time, however, is not always a softener; it is sometimes a toughener. If it mellows the fruit, it hardens the wood and bark, and some hearts turn the sap of

life into fiber rather than into luscious pulp. The self-made man who has been spoiled with constant success, whose father made the best shoe-lasts before him and whose son is learning to make the best shoe-lasts, just as he does, after him, is likely to exclaim, "Just as I say," at least when there is question of shoe-lasts. Yet it was a man of that description, a man proud of his family success, who nevertheless was deferential in other points. He did not wish to go beyond his lasts and was ready to utter "Just as you say" when you could get him away from his pet subject.

Take that phrase from the language of the army, and the army becomes a disorganized mob. Take it from business, and the wheels of commerce are blocked. "Just as I say" is grit on the bearings; "Just as you say" is a lubricant. What is it that marks off society from anarchy? It is the recognition of authority, and recognition of authority is a philosophical and lordly way of expressing, "Just as you say."

In the famous Greek tragedy of King Œdipus there is a stormy fight going on be-

tween the king and his brother-in-law. It has reached that helpless stage so often witnessed in wordy quarrels, where one combatant almost out of breath shouts, "You did," and the other combatant equally breathless replies with the convincing and powerful cry, I didn't." There were several ways out of this deadlock besides the death of both parties, but the brother-in-law heard something he could agree with and at once interjected, "Just as you say," or what amounts to that. The ultimatums disappeared for a time at least, and reason seized the opportunity to talk. "Just as you say," will always win a truce, if it does not succeed in avoiding hostilities.

The eloquent Secretary of State, Mr. Bryan, has spoken many excellent speeches in his busy life, but his biographers ought to rank a recent sentence of his far above all more lengthy and more elaborate exhibitions of oratory. "Is that your last word?" (last word is English for ultimatum) he was asked in an exchange of diplomatic conferences, and Mr. Bryan replied in words which should never die, "There is no last

word between friends." We might risk spoiling the finality of that phrase by stating that if there could be a last word, it would be, "Just as you say," which comes immediately before, "Just as we say," and with that harmonious chord the music of friendly conversation comes to a happy close.

There is yet another place where this magic phrase wins wondrous victories. It is heard there softer than a whisper, but results in the eloquence of deeds and speaks in power through a life of holiness. What is a saint but one who to every prompting of conscience replies at once and effectively, "Just as you say." How can we better sum up the life of the Saint of Saints than in that sublime and divine way of voicing, "Just as you say," the courageous words which made Calvary, "Not my will but thine be done."

EQUIPMENT OF A SOUL-CRITIC

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TO qualify as a critic of a poem or a picture, of wine or cloth, of horse-shoes or bricks, demands a certain training, some study and knowledge of the subject to be criticized, but to be a critic of character, to appraise the value of a soul, to pronounce infallible decisions on a person's actions and purposes, to fathom the heart, whose secret depths only a God's omniscience has explored, all this requires no preparation, no skill, almost no knowledge. What will be your motives if you make up your mind not to be the only member of the human race abstaining from this universal occupation? Rarely will you acknowledge the motive even to yourself. But if you emit the harsh grating and squeaking of complaining criticism, you will recall, if you think a moment, that there has been a

rub somewhere, there has been an exposed surface and there has been friction. If you, as a qualified critic, ascribe to another the powers and perhaps the presence of Beelzebub, you will be dimly conscious that the other has clashed with your own prerogative, has exposed your pretensions and through lack of the right lubricant on your part has drawn from you the shrill screech of friction, soul-friction, sadder and more discordant than that of the hub and axle.

What will be the substance of your pronouncements, eminent soul-critic? Take a vague rumor or a tattered truth, soiled and rent by constant handling, or listen to the report of a surmise of a hearsay of a conjecture and with that reliable evidence blacken, revile and dispatch in a superior fashion the immortal soul to whose study you are at present devoting your adequate abilities. In methods you will find it best to imitate the unapproachable propensities of the mole and the refined tastes of the buzzard. The most expert soul-critics convey their criticisms through others, remaining themselves in the background. They

hold the purse and succeed in inspiring others to protect against any waste which might else have swelled their own possessions.

When you come to the actual criticism, borrow some well-known truth universally admitted, such as, "No good can come from Nazareth," or "He is a Samaritan," or "Everybody says so." Then with that superiority of intuition which puts you above all little cramping rules of logic boldly assert that the place of a man's birth inevitably establishes his worthlessness, deduce from the sound of his name the unsoundness of his mind and argue irresistibly from the way he walks to the utter corruption of his moral constitution. Admit no limitations to your infallibility. Speak out with assurance, like the eminent soul-critic of earlier days, who roundly asserted that if this man happened to be a prophet, He would know that she was a sinner. Do not let your confidence be shaken if as a fact He was a prophet and did know and she was not then a sinner. Such trifling things as facts should not hinder one who wishes to become a master of soul-criticism. You should say with

the famous judge, "I refuse to listen to the other side: it has a tendency to confuse the court."

When you have thus equipped yourself, for this chosen pursuit of most of mankind, you will be in great demand. Wherever a conversation languishes, step up at once and throw upon its dying embers your choice fuel and it will flame up grandly. Your most delectable occupation, it will be, after the example of better equipped spirits, to throw souls into flames of fire. Let me urge you in conclusion not by any means to stray toward a certain Mount or listen to the words of One there being nailed to a Cross. If you were to hear and heed His words, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do," your education as a soul-critic would be ruined and your occupation forever gone.

GIANT OAKS FROM LITTLE ACORNS

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WHEN a spring on the hill-side bubbles up from its sandy bottom, it starts a rill down the slope. For a while the silver thread creeps along, and then it pushes its crystal nose against a diminutive knoll — a mountain for its littleness. There is a moment's pause; the flow is stemmed. A problem arises, and we eagerly watch to see whether the trembling water will run to the right or to the left. With a leap, the pent-up rill rushes off forever to the right, hurries down to the plain, and broadens below into a stream. It was the stubborn opposition of a tiny pebble just to the left of the knoll that determined for all time the bed of the stream.

In the lives of great men there is often such a pause as we have seen on the hill-side. The happiness or misery of thousands, the

welfare of a people, the destinies of a nation, are determined, sometimes, by the merest chance, and in the more wonderful chanceless workings of Divine Providence, a slight accident would seem to decide the career and fate of countless souls. Some people, it might be boldly said, have been saints from their very cradles. But more have had to undergo the struggles of self-reform and the pains of conversion. It is in the latter class that we may especially discover the apparently chance causes that God makes use of to work wonders, causes that we should call trivial, were their results not so important.

When a man looks with his mind's eye back, thro' some four hundred years, and fixes his mind's gaze on the daring hero of Pampeluna slowly convalescing, what are the thoughts that awake within him; what are the feelings that fill his heart? Surely he thinks of the glories that God has won for his Church by that stricken soldier. His memory recalls, his mind dwells upon, his heart grows glad at, the many peoples won to Christ, and the great multitudes instructed in human knowledge, and the countless souls raised to the

heights of sanctity by the followers of the wounded Lord of Loyola. His imagination kindles at these thoughts, he is transported back to the awful moment when the ambitious Inigo calls for a book of chivalry; his interest in the reply engrosses him; he trembles as if such a book might yet be found, and seems to doubt whether he may consider Xavier and Campion, Suarez and Aquaviva, Bourdalone and Secchi as secure yet to God and His Church. He is finally relieved. No novel can be found, and the newspaper had not, as yet, been invented. Inigo, of Loyola, receives the Life of Christ and His Saints, and becomes St. Ignatius of Loyola. Down the centuries flows the growing tide of his great army, whose currents were directed in the right way by a happy defect in the reading facilities of Loyola Castle.

STOOPING TO CONQUER

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WHEN some people bend, you can fancy you hear their vertebræ creak. They are as supple as a crowbar and as free from friction in negotiating a stooping posture as an iron joint thick with rust. Do not be too quick in ascribing all stiffness to pride. It is true that pride is unsurpassed in that particular department. Travelers admire the colored women of the West Indies for their erect carriage. It is the custom for the natives there to put their weighty burdens upon their heads and a course of that training from the pickaninny to the mammy stage gives these ladies the lines of a drum-major. Consider then the stiffness imparted by pride when one through all the moments of his conscious life is balancing with a high-lifted brow the colossal weight of an importance but dimly recognized by any except its appreciative

possessor. We should rather look for the Eiffel Tower to bow with true Parisian politeness and in lissome, willowy ease as expect to get the slightest inclination from pride without an infinite deal of harsh friction.

Yet if pride is the worst opponent of true condescension and in its moments of greatest triumph does but succeed in giving a poor imitation, a terrifying caricature of the real virtue, do not for that reason think that pride is the only thing that irons out the bend, puts a starched collar around the neck and develops Arctic conditions on the face. Sometimes an unhappy shyness or awkwardness or inexperience or sensitiveness or some other lamented weakness leaves one helplessly cold and helplessly uncondescending. Father Wassmann, who has spent a life-time studying ants, says that the only reason why we cannot tame these wonderful insects is that we are too big and blundering. If fingers are at times thumbs, they must be veritable elephant hoofs when they start in to pet and fondle an ant. There is the precise predicament that confronts many a

man whose heart is warm with sympathy and whose starchedness is wilted to tearful compassion by a baby crying in a railroad train. He wants to do something, but he is deterred and frozen stiff by the appalling vision of the bull in the china-shop. He dodges behind a newspaper, and his female neighbors, who by mysterious words and dexterous gestures are wheedling smiles out of tears, look at the newspaper and become militant against this latest exhibition of the brute.

Oh, the wonderful condescension of true love! The toughest steel that has been made bomb-proof by years of pride, cannot remain unmolten an instant in the glowing fire of love. On the street love bends over the poor and crippled; in the hospital it stoops with winning smile and patient care above the rows of outstretched sufferers; in the nursery — look there and see the world's most touching picture of condescension! There queens doff their royalty, and glaciers merge into gulf-streams. The loftiest dignity that ever held the human race at a distance, there stoops to a few inches and a few ounces of

bleating weakness and is contentedly, blissfully busy with the tiniest trifles.

In that scene, haply common enough, we have an answer to the little girl who protested against the reproof that God was displeased at some fault: "Why should God mind?" she urged. He need not, but He does. His infinite condescension stoops from eternity to time, from divinity to humanity, from the infinite to the narrow measures of space. He condescends to be sad at man's coldness and glad with man's goodness, and it is the love of our Father for His own children which brings Him down to their little, very little hearts.

I HAVE MADE UP MY MIND

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CRYSTALS are beautiful things. Many precious stones are crystals. The diamond is a crystal, and the quartz family sparkles in a variety of colors on cuffs and neckties and rings and wherever else the adventitious aids of nature's quarries can accentuate native beauty by a new attraction or relieve the eye for the absence of beauty by a distracting substitute. Crystals are as wonderful in their birth as they are glorious in their full growth. They solidify out of molten masses or marshal along their rigid lines when some liquid evaporates or, more rarely, start into being from condensed vapors. It is a never-ceasing source of wonder to see the multitude of molecules move into line like well-drilled soldiers.

Crystals are usually handsome, but they are always hard and they have sharp edges and follow rigid lines and protrude into

awkward points. Now if crystals had brains and a tongue in addition to their other fine qualities, they would find it hard not to be proud. They would at once be put with that class of people which is also likely to be rigid and hard and angular, the people who have made up their mind. It would be desirable to add the crystals to this family of crystallized souls. They might impart some of their beauty to their human counterparts, who do not furnish us with many precious stones or desirable ornaments.

The process of making up one's mind is mysterious indeed. If the process were put in other more intelligible terms, the makers might not flatter themselves so often upon what they have made. "I have made up my mind," is in most cases only a self-deception, a diamond statement of a charcoal reality. You should rather say you are set on having your own way, that nothing can change you, that there is very little reasoning of the mind but much stubbornness of the will in what you are pleased to think you have made up. Like your brother crystals you have cooled from some fiery state, in

your case, one of anger or resentment; you have sharpened an edge on your tongue; you have developed a very stony, if very bright, look in the eye, and all your features have hardened into rigid lines. If you have made up your mind, there is no need of clenching the fists; the nails may hurt the palm. There is no need of gritting the teeth; by that you gratify no one but the dentist. Mankind commonly comes into touch with crystals in two ways, in the form of ice and some kinds of sand-paper, and these are cold and rough articles. It is, as crystallographers tell us, the molecular constitution of matter which is responsible for crystals, and if you who have made up your mind into ice or fractured quartz on sand-paper, could look into the molecules of your so-called mind, you would find strange lines of force. Jealousy and spite and prejudices and pique and selfishness, these are the builders of human crystals.

Happily such are not always the forces making up men's minds. The Catholic who has made up his mind about the truths of his faith in obedience to God's word is a

precious stone and may be as unyielding as you will. The happy couple who make up their minds finally at God's altar with God's blessings are a combination of jewels; they are twin crystals and may their made-up minds know no cleavage! It comes to this then, that it all depends upon the mind-maker. If error or malice are the mind-makers, then mere hardness is no excellence. Herod made up his mind to cut off the head of the Baptist because of those at table, and Pilate resolved upon a worse murder because the voices of the mob prevailed. If, however, truth and goodness give firmness and beauty to the mind, if the will hardens into solidity out of the fire of charity, then adamantine infrangibility gives an added lustre to your fairness of soul. You are a crusader who bears a blood-red cross and have made up your mind because God wills it.

LILLIPUTIAN SPIRITS

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SUPPOSE you lived in a pin-hole; think of the magnificent arch of sky which would bend over your head; sweep your gaze around upon the wide horizon encircling your vision. A rain-drop would be a deluge; a grain of sand would be a mighty boulder crashing down upon you with the force of an avalanche. You would sympathize with the anonymous poet who sang in his wild dreams: "Mosquitoes would be mastodons, if we were only small enough." "No, thank you," you would reply, "they are satisfactorily large as it is." What the alliterative versifier has expressed so fearsomely, the philosopher expresses more austerely in the phrase that all magnitude is relative.

If a pin-hole can convert a drop of water into Niagara, why is it not possible to reverse the telescope and see things small which are

uncomfortably large? It is far more comforting to see mosquitoes dwindling into mites than developing into leviathans. Are you stranded at the bottom of a pin-hole or standing in triumphant exaltation on a mountain peak? The local pin-hole, the national pin-hole, the pin-holes of bigotry, of antipathy, of selfishness, these are the narrowers of men's horizons, these are the factories for the world's myopia, which away from the oculist we call short-sightedness. The usual derricks for hoisting people out of such cramped quarters are travel, reading, growth in years, humility and in many aggravated cases, a good digestion.

Where you most need the reversed telescope is in contemplating evil. Some have been so overwhelmed by the evil around them that for them it has eclipsed God's providence, argued away His goodness, and even His existence. When things get too near, they bulk large and blot out the landscape. What narrows the skyline for you may be a mountain range or a city or one huge building, but for another the view may disappear behind a tree or a curtain, two

feet wide, or an eyelid, half an inch wide. A grain of dust in your eye means more to you than a sand-storm in the Sahara. Mighty armies may be slaying millions across the ocean, but that carnage will not shake the foundations of divine confidence for a mother, who might give way to despair at the loss of a tiny babe.

The pin-hole position limits the outlook and keeps evil very near. The more remote the distance, the lesser the evil. You will not worry about a twinge of pain in one foot of an ant because you tower above it. Take your position on the sun, and this earth is a very tiny thing. Mount higher still and stand upon the heights of heaven; throw the stretches of eternity between you and your evils and then what has become of them? A life of suffering is but a moment of pain; the carnage of war is a drop of blood; a devastating plague is a passing indisposition; "a thousand years is but as one day."

You have the testimony of one who took his outlook from the pinnacle of heaven, anticipating that place before the time usually allotted to ordinary mortals. We must die

to get out of our pin-hole entirely. This witness, however, "was caught up to the third heaven," and he weighed all the evils of time in the scales of eternity, and he discovered that our present tribulation is momentary and light but "worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory."

GIVING BAD NAMES

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LOVE me, love my —" Just a moment, please! What is its name? On your answer it depends whether we shall embrace your canine friend as a card of admission into your friendship or load up a gun for his extermination. Mothers and fathers are worried about the names with which to equip their children for life. They shrink from Tom, Dick or Harry and ornament their offspring with Reginald, Algernon or Montmorency. Yet when it comes to naming a dog, a man will proceed often with that reckless disregard of consequences and feelings with which a small boy will dishonor the same animal by a very different kind of appendage.

If names are so destructive to dogs it is not a difficult sum in logic to reckon the amount of care to be exercised in naming a character. You expect a visitor. Only one, perhaps,

knows the newcomer. The question is put: Who is he? or Who is she? That is a momentous question and a perilous instant. By the response to that question you will find out whether the answerer is an advance agent for an ammunition factory and has sold you a charge for a gun, or is a judge who has just awarded a blue ribbon for the new candidate to the exhibition.

There are certain characters that were given a bad name in some remote period of antiquity, and now they are fair game for any one from the joke column to the editorial page. Whether the name is deserved in particular cases is never asked. The step-mother and the mother-in-law, the poet and the tramp, are already cataloged and tagged for some people. You may allege unfairness, lack of charity, claims of justice, particular exceptions. Your appeals are useless. They see the name; they close their eyes and fire away, and their victims escape — in the Mexican fashion.

Certain early novelists wishing to give a special piquancy to their unsavory stories ascribed them to priests and nuns. Poets

and artists, taking their cue from these evil sponsors of religion, handed on the bad names, and to-day you have a few well-meaning but misguided Protestants gunning for the kennel so disastrously named. From Thomas Cromwell to Oliver Cromwell, England manufactured bad names for the Catholics and as a direct consequence Ulster volunteers import arms to shoot the Catholics of Ireland.

Giving a dog a bad name is a very serious and very harmful business for all, except the Krupps, the Maxims and the Duponts. A man may not have moral murder in his heart when he light-heartedly gives out his bad names, but the result is bound to be deadly. He might have awarded prizes, but unfortunately he elects to give a present which has a muzzle velocity of five hundred feet per second.

These bad names, whether traditional or otherwise, save the trouble of thinking. All step-mothers are cruel, all Jesuits are cunning, all monks are intemperate and immoral, all Catholics are traitors, these are the phrases to get by heart and pass on and make the bearers of the names better dead. Sometimes,

however, an independent thinker rises up and says: "I will find out who presided over the baptism of these unfortunate animals, and before I reach for my gun, I will find out whether the bad name is deserved." Such men as that, not too lazy to use their brains, not so cowardly as to be a mere echo of local, national or historical gossip, find out that after all good can come from Nazareth despite its bad name. Such intellectual and moral heroes cease gunning and begin cheering.

YOU BEGIN

YOU BEGIN

NCE upon a time a centipede was scurrying along, and in a moment of such paralysis as affects a nervous person crossing a street in front of swift vehicles, it hesitated and stopped. Veracious history asserts that it never could get along again. Although it had a hundred legs, it did not move because each one of the hundred said to its neighbor, "You begin." There you have a picture of a thousand like paralyses among men. It is difficult to bring a man to see the necessity of action; it is far more difficult to make him see that he must begin. "I had rather tell twenty what it were best to do than be one of the twenty to follow my own bidding." So Shakespeare said many years ago. "We must do something" is the unanimous cry, and "You begin" is the deadening refrain. Many an eloquent speech or stirring editorial or mas-

terly book, hot with meritorious indignation, has been foiled of its noble purpose by the lamentable inertia of transferred initiative.

The world is dissatisfied with its professional men and brings its complaints to the university. The university forwards the complaints to the college; the college to the high-school; the high-school to the grammar-school; the grammar-school to the kindergarten; the kindergarten to the nursery; the nursery, under the promptings of eugenics, transmits the difficulty to the grandparents. "You begin" is the chorus of the babies to their ancestors, and from ancestor to ancestor back to the original perversity of Adam — or the atom — is the responsibility shifted until the pebble plumped into the sea here, to the tune of "You begin," sends ever-widening ripples to the far-off shores of eternity, where they lap with an echo of the same hopeless elegy.

Our good President cannot open a letter or read a telegram or answer a telephone call or get a wireless message or see a visitor without receiving by these and all means of communication a thousand schemes which he is to initiate. Whether it be a war in Europe, or

the neighbor's daughter at the piano, the inferiority of coffee, or the superiority of foreign athletics, the price of eggs or the smoking of cigarettes by anæmic youths, the presence of dust on the street or the absence of rain from the sky, all the troubles of land and sea, of men and women, are referred ultimately to the President, and the world waits for him to begin.

How is this endless chain to be broken? By beginning where charity and all other virtues begin: at home. All reform starts in the individual. All reform perfects the interior and then works to the exterior. Improvement is not imposed upon one from the outside. The way of perfection is not: "You begin and I follow," but rather "I begin and you follow." It is not precept but example that is the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

When Frederic Ozanam heard from scoffing unbelievers the taunt: "Show us your works," he did not proceed to write to his parish priest, who would proceed to write to his bishop, who would proceed to write to his archbishop, who would proceed to write to

his cardinal protector, who would proceed to interview the Pope. No, Ozanam headed the procession himself. He replied: "I will show you my works," and in a short time he had millions in the St. Vincent de Paul Society showing the world that Christianity is not dead but still lives. It was a weak woman with no office, no holy orders, no powers, who was the stay of the Church at the end of the fourteenth century. St. Catherine of Siena had zeal, and zeal is initiative at white heat. She began and the Pope himself followed.

I WANT TO KNOW

I WANT TO KNOW

IT is not one State alone of these United States, or one town or even one individual alone that experiences the desire of having the truth manifested. "I want to know" is as universal a cry as "I want to eat." There is hunger and thirst in the soul as well as in the body. The power which gave man an eye with capacity and tendency for sight, an ear with the capacity and tendency for sound, gave the soul a curiosity with a capacity and tendency for knowledge. The reason why these commonplace remarks acquire a particular and pertinent appropriateness here and now is to be found in the multiplication to-day of the means of gaining information. Horizons are indefinitely extended; the sphere of sound prolongs its radiuses to tremendous distances. The voice that sailed on the waves of air and sped a few yards away, has now been launched on a sea of less sluggish billows and sweeps in vastly wider surges to

thousands of miles. Nor need we to await the sound's travel along the channels of wire when even swifter channels open up to it through all the radiating air. If sound speeds so lightly over the oceans of ether, color will not be outdone. In fact color has always been travelling on the waves that sound has but recently sailed upon, but we do not see as far as we hear, simply because we have no mechanical eye as delicate as the mechanical ear which from wires or from wireless ether echoes back to sound the far-off vibrations of the voice or metal.

Until we are able to see through woods or mountains and the swelling sides of the world, we shall have to content ourselves with the lofty eye of the aeroplane and the long-distance eye of the telescope to accompany the extended ear of the telephone. The man who wants to know to-day, has ample means at his disposal of gaining information. If time and inventiveness changed the toy, zoetrope, into the long reel of the moving picture where flowers grow and butterflies unfold and far-off battles are fought, what may we not expect of other mechanical de-

vices? When the seismometer grows more delicate, we may be able to catch the footstep of father as he leaves his office, or the crash when one snowflake falls upon another.

But why should eye and ear be the only senses with enlarged boundaries? Does it savour of the Arabian Nights to dream that man one day may be able to attach to his nose a sensitive receiver which will bring him the fragrance of the tropics, or draw across his lips by some delicate service sips of oriental beverages or tastes of Parisian *chef d'œuvres?* Why, we behold daily almost as wonderful extensions of knowledge in response to the cry "I want to know." Sex-hygiene makes physicians of primary pupils; biology and anatomy transform sweet girl-graduates into expert surgeons; committees, slummers and novelists have thrown every crime upon the revealing screen; advertising and publicity have lifted the veil from all other secrets of dress or disease or what not.

If aeroplanes, as has been said, have done away with surprise in war, are we not rapidly coming to the time when the fresh, delightful and invigorating shock of surprise will dis-

appear from everything? Will not the appetite for information grow jaded and pall? There is complete assurance from one who in olden days wanted to know and who refused nothing whatsoever his eyes desired, that all the knowledge of the world was vanity and that he still wanted to know. The uttermost widening of the horizon of sense cannot sate a thirst for truth which overleaps such narrow restrictions and extends to the boundless circle of infinity. But what are the hosts of mankind doing to improve the means of gaining information for the soul and to keep pace with the wonderful inventions for enlarging the scope of the senses? Here and there recently a few men have begun to make retreats to get a nearer view of God. They have closed out sounds to hear better, and have gone away from engrossing sights that they may see farther and deeper, and have resolutely held aloof from distracting thoughts that their unweighted souls may soar to sublime heights and attain unto more dazzling visions. Few, too few are they who really want to know.

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